

THE REGENERATION OF BRITAIN

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OF BRITAIN

by

The Right Hon.

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FOREWORD

IN NOVEMBER 1960, AFTER 10 years in the House of Commons, I found myself banished from it and launched into a long and bitter constitutional struggle. During the exile that followed I had more time to travel and to think about Britain and the world than is possible when you are absorbed in day to day politics.

These chapters, with minor corrections, reprinted from *The Guardian* in which they first appeared, are the product of those years in the wilderness. They were written for people who share the same impatience that I have with the frustration and defeatism that have characterised this country during the last decade. These are the people who worked so hard to secure the election of the Labour Government in October. These are the people upon whom the success or failure of this Government now depends.

The regeneration of Britain is one of the most urgent and exciting tasks facing us today. To achieve it we must really understand the contemporary world, see its possibilities, identify its dangers and evolve new institutions powerful enough to give us control of our destiny. It will mean furious discussion, continual innovation and the courage to think everything out afresh. Above all, it means that we must learn to believe in ourselves again.

A. W. B.

House of Commons
November 1964

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PART I

THE AGE OF REFORM



REFORM

April 10, 1964

BRITAIN MUST BE one of the most conservative nations in the world. It is 900 years since we were last invaded and 300 since the Civil War. The feudal system yielded slowly to the assault of nineteenth-century industrial capitalism and absorbed its leaders with peerages to blunt their ardour for total victory. The middle classes yielded slowly to the onrush of the enfranchised working class and called the Crown in aid to knight the trade union leaders in an attempt to digest the new revolution. The Empire builders yielded to the advance of colonial freedom fighters and entertained them to tea at Buckingham Palace after they had been released from gaol.

The history of the British ruling class is the history of judicious retreats in the face of the inevitable. A mixture of realism, humanity and laziness has saved them from the gallows and us from the barricades. The continuing retention of some power was well worth the continuing loss of some face. The machinery of conservative indoctrination that permeates our whole national life could be relied on to redress the balance.

There is no doubt that this system of government and pattern of life has much to recommend it. London has been spared the blood-letting that has stained the streets of Paris and we have all escaped the brutalities that accompany all revolutions and counter-revolutions. Stability gives a sense of security that makes freedom of thought and speech and association both tolerable and irresistible. Our long and proud tradition of dissent—persecuted only in moderation—has

always challenged the established order, and in the end it always eroded its powers. Progress is fitful and slow. Social and political revolutions on the scale of 1906 and 1945 are rare. But at least when they do come, 90 per cent of the changes made remain and become accepted. Nothing is ever the same again. Reformers may have to campaign for half a lifetime before their chance comes. When it comes they must seize it and act quickly or it will be too late.

Now, at last, reform is in the air again. All the signs point towards it; 1964 can see the beginning of changes just as exciting as at any time in the past. There is the prospect of Mr Harold Wilson's first administration and the implementation of Labour's New Britain programme. This will be welcomed by many people who cannot face the thought of 18 years of Conservative rule and now accept that it is time for a change. Five more years of Sir Alec Douglas-Home and Mr Henry Brooke and Mr Selwyn Lloyd is just too much.

But the mood of reform goes far beyond a desire for fresh and vigorous political leadership. It reflects a growing dissatisfaction with the accepted institutions and methods in Britain today. At last everything is being questioned and the apologists for the *status quo* are everywhere on the defensive.

This then is the year for the big push. Whether you are a teacher, a manager, a worker, a scientist, or in any other occupation you can name, now is your chance to get things changed. The revitalisation of society can never be carried through unless new ideas bubble up from below.

The distinguishing characteristic of a vigorous society is one in which the future becomes more real and important than the past. For this reason, if for no other, everyone should set his sights high and go for the big changes that really matter. This is a time for fundamental rethinking that goes to the whole root of our society and it must include a critical questioning of some of its most sacred institutions.

For it is clear that some things are radically wrong :

1. The whole process of decision-making in government is now out of date. An amateur centralised Civil Service, however dedicated, simply cannot analyse future trends accurately and prepare real alternative policies to meet them.
 2. A weak, ill-equipped House of Commons cannot keep up the barrage of well-directed informed criticism which every Government needs if it is to be kept on its toes.
 3. The creaking, piecemeal structure of local government is constitutionally incapable of serving the small areas in which it operates.
 4. The old-fashioned, expensive, ritualistic legal system, with its divided profession and cumbrous and slow reform procedures, cannot provide a technical society with the framework of law which it needs.
 5. Mass media in the hands of interested parties, most of them subservient to the commercial and political requirements of big business, cannot develop their full educational potential.
 6. Industry in which production is dominated by finance inevitably suffers by elevating the stockbroker and the salesman above the manager and the technician.
 7. The worship of status and the entrenchment of privilege behind the camouflage of hereditary pageantry will always kill initiative and frustrate new ideas.
- Can we do what has to be done? Those who do not see the need for reform are unlikely to be convinced at this late stage. But there are plenty of key people who have already committed themselves to the 1964 reform movement. The Establishment had better prepare its plans for another wise withdrawal.

GALLOPING OBSOLESCENCE

February 7, 1964

BRITAIN TODAY IS suffering from galloping obsolescence. The evidence of this is all around us. The progress we make is too slow and the problems we face are accumulating at a faster rate than we can clear them. Every technical society is in danger of catching this disease but we seem to have it worst of all, because we live under the twin curses of amateurism and over-specialisation.

The worship of the amateur is a peculiarly British vice. We go out of our way to honour people who boast that they didn't do very well at school (even when they did) or pretend that they don't really work hard (even when they do). It's often the same in industry. There are still people who positively believe that higher education and management training are a waste of time. Because of this, huge sections of industry and administration have cut themselves off deliberately from the new thinking that has advanced so rapidly as a result of research.

The Watch Committee struggles desperately against the rising volume of crime, while the Professor of Criminology who is studying its causes is equally frustrated because nobody seems to be listening to what he has to say. The widening gulf between those who are extending the frontiers of knowledge and those who are responsible for the conduct of affairs is a major cause of obsolescence.

At last there are signs that amateurism is in retreat. The nation is ready for a great expansion in education and research. Now we must be careful that we do not allow ourselves

to be entrapped by the cult of specialisation. The more knowledge man acquires the narrower the field of any one specialist, and the more there is to know about less and less. And what sort of a view do you get of man when you are the greatest living expert on one tiny fragment of his nature?

Already doctors see people as patients, advertising agents see us as consumers, social workers as problem families, and lawyers as litigants. I don't feel any less a person because I am known as a telephone number, a national insurance number, or the recipient of an income tax code number. These are liberating factors that simplify the handling of my business by the agencies with which I deal. But what is terrifying is the fact that the agencies that deal with us and our problems are too often concerned only with the narrow sector of our lives which touch their particular field.

To take a narrow view of human beings is both destructive of the individual personality and also unscientific. The interaction of one factor on another cannot be considered by the specialist alone. The urban explosion is a perfect example of the failure to relate industrial development, housing development, road construction and office building, one to another.

There is certainly no paradox in denouncing amateurism and specialisation at the same time. Both are wrong for the same reason. Both amateur and specialist are narrowing their vision when it should be broadened. Of the two, the cult of specialisation will probably become the most dangerous, for it may create its own mythology of expertise designed to freeze out those whom its elite do not think qualified to comment.

Yet it may well be that the most valuable individual in modern society is the innovator who, though not necessarily the best in his own field, has so successfully retained his capacity for general thinking that he can make the really important breakthroughs and see the relevant connections. Anything which makes it harder to locate the innovator or

makes it harder for him to play his vital rôle, will be a loss for the whole community.

Some years ago the Rand Corporation in America did a study of decision-making. They took two groups of soldiers, each containing representatives from every rank from general to private. One group was in uniform, but the other was in civilian clothes and sworn to secrecy as to his real rank. Each member of each group was put in a room with a telephone and told to get to know the other members of his group by phoning them. A careful watch was kept on the switchboard to see how the pattern of calls developed. In the uniformed group the calls developed according to rank. The private called the sergeant, the sergeant called the captain, and the general only spoke to the colonel below him.

In the non-uniformed group the calls were absolutely haphazard for a while and then settled down on the basis of factors related to ability, character and temperament. When the patterns were settled, a problem was put to each group. The non-uniformed men solved it in a flash and those who were handicapped by their rank floundered on in chaos.

If we are, as I think, on the eve of a period of revolutionary change in Britain, it must be a revolution of a different kind. Traditional revolutions begin with the erection of barricades. Ours must begin with the destruction of the barriers that now divide us one from another. The paradox of modern society is that we can only reap the harvest of specialisation when we have developed the courage to generalise professionally.

POLITICIANS AND STATESMEN

March 20, 1964

“I DO CONGRATULATE YOU on keeping clear of politics.” Receiving this intended compliment after a recent speech, I sat down to analyse the mass of muddled thinking that lies behind the ideal of a non-political politician.

Some High Tories genuinely believe themselves to be above politics; when they stand as “independent” candidates, the element of self-deception is almost as important as the element of deception consciously perpetrated on the electors. But what do others mean by it? For it has a real meaning for millions of people who are not committed to the Conservative Party.

It is, in part, a revulsion against the way in which some political arguments are fought: the personal attacks, the half-truths, the selection of facts, the intrinsic unfairness of all debates at the hustings. As election fever mounts, the committed get more committed and the uncommitted get more impatient with it all. Leader writers and clerics, who denounce the excesses of campaigning politicians, have a clear field. But until they can find a better way of resolving deep differences of opinion, their criticism may sting, but cannot convert, the object of their censure. At any rate, it is understandable—and if that were the only black mark against politics, we who are politicians could bear it with fortitude.

Unfortunately, the misunderstanding goes deeper than that. There is a widespread belief that certain things are inherently political and certain things are not. Here there is a basic confusion. For a careful study of allegedly nonpolitical issues

reveals them to be no more than currently noncontroversial. Three hundred years ago, the monarchy was in the very centre of political argument and may well be again though it is not now. The health service, now accepted by all parties, was moulded in the crucible of debate. Town planning is at present moving into the centre of the arena. So is science, once thought of as the preserve of the absent-minded professor. We ought to be far more worried if an issue is supposed to be non-political than if it is being hotly debated. For it usually means that we are accepting the *status quo* too uncritically.

The symptoms of antipolitics are easy to diagnose. Apathy is one, protest another. The vast majority of people who profess not to care are really expressing a profound subconscious defeatism about their own ability to influence events. "What can I do to avert nuclear war or eliminate slums?" It is not a new problem. At no time in history can it ever have been easier to persuade people that they had the power to shape their destiny. Nothing can be done only for so long as people think nothing can be done.

The antipolitics of protest offers a different challenge. Here are people who care passionately about affairs but have no confidence in the efficacy of political action. The educational rôle of protest is immense, and the individual witness offered by those who protest is capable of blasting a hole in the cotton-wool complacency that surrounds so many uncomfortable issues. All that protest lacks is a political follow-through : the organisation of hitherto undirected energy for change. It is the artillery barrage preceding an infantry advance, and unless the troops do move it can subside as quickly as a firework display, leaving the enemy in position as before.

If politics means anything, it means an all-embracing interest in the total affairs of the community. It means the inter-connection of everything and an attempt to get a perspective of the whole. It is that comprehensive function which

gives to politicians their greatest satisfaction and which—even more than the prospects of power—keeps them enthralled by their work. To identify the problems of contemporary society, to locate the men and women who are working for a solution, to evolve policies from ideas, to organise mass movements to campaign for these policies, to convince the people to accept them, to carry through the programme by consent, lubricating the process by wise compromises without losing sight of the objective as he goes along—these are the tasks of the politician.

What if he succeeds in his Herculean endeavours? He is at once elevated to statesmanship. Politicians who are good at their job are politicians no more. Their triumphs are never allowed to reflect on their profession as a whole. The tributes to President Kennedy illustrated this most dramatically. Here was a man who excelled at politics. He faced the harsh realities of his world. He harnessed the best brains he could find, evolved a manifesto pitched to bring out the best in his audiences, organised with consummate skill, and, having won, he acted where he could act and waited where he couldn't. Yet to describe him now as a politician would be—for many—to insult his memory.

Happily, it is not as bad as it sounds. The antipoliticals are in retreat. After 10 years of apathy, the mood of Britain is slowly changing. Accepted ideas are everywhere being challenged. Foreign experience is being seriously studied. Specific campaigners—against world poverty and for improved education—have revealed widespread public impatience with national inactivity. This swing back to politics is far and away the most encouraging thing that is happening in this country today. The long sleep is over, and if 1964 is remembered in the history books—as I think it will be—this is why. But the only way that this great awakening can be meaningful is by using politics and politicians as instruments for effecting the changes that have to be made.

AD HOCKERY

April 24, 1964

JUST HOW IMPORTANT will ideology be in the forthcoming general election? Is there a real choice of philosophies to be made or is political dogma now no more than a decorative cloak traditionally worn by candidates who are actually engaged in a crude personal struggle for power? When Quintin Hogg calls Enoch Powell the "Mao Tse-tung" of Toryism should that dispose of Powell as a serious political influence? Is socialism as "musty and old-fashioned" as Lady Violet Bonham-Carter asserts? With a little time in hand before the campaign begins these are questions worth thinking about.

After 1959 a vocal school of thought emerged arguing that British politics ought to move—and were moving—much closer to American politics, where the choice of parties bears little or no relation to ideology. For the pundits who peddled this particular line, all signs of Conservative "liberalism" and Labour "revisionism" were equally welcome just because they seemed to narrow the gulf and blur the choice and smudge the lines that divide us. It seemed as if all the platitudinous prayers of the preachers and the leader-writers would be answered. Men of goodwill and no party would come into their own at last, wiser counsels would prevail and the rhythmic swing of the pendulum would replace the fall of the hammer on the anvil of argument.

Short of an actual coalition, we were half promised years of political debate between Ins and Outs rotating for ever round issues of administrative efficiency and enlivened by auctions of electoral promises tailored to meet the sophisticated desires

of affluent voters. It was to be the heyday of political PR image-builders, packaging the rival leaders and knocking their opponents. The British brand of personality-cult reporting developed by the gossip-writers would have blossomed into an even more luxuriant growth.

But in the event no such thing happened. Indeed the ideological content of this year's election choice promises to be greater than at any time since the war. The facts of contemporary life have forced this choice upon us. The decisions that are waiting to be made are too difficult and too important to be left to mere ad hockery.

Enoch Powell understands this and has the courage to say it. Even those who disagree with his philosophy and the policies that flow from it must recognise that they do stem from a serious analysis of society and a personal conviction about the way in which it should develop. He knows that, without some framework of thought to guide decision-making, the whole business of government degenerates into a frantic search for a hotchpotch of measures designed solely to maintain yourself in power. It is greatly to his credit that when he sees this process taking place within his own party he should feel moved to speak out. He suspects that the whole direction of modern society is towards socialism. And of course he is right.

The case for socialism is growing stronger every day.

1. As a tool of analysis it is invaluable, even for non-Socialists, for it enables us to understand the forces that are at work in society and the clash of interests that do exist. How, without Marx's gloomy prediction that the rich will get richer and the poor poorer, can we understand the political consequences of the world population explosion and China's growing influence?

2. As a guide to techniques for dealing with a wide range of industrial and social problems, socialism is making headway

in all Western societies. The increasing rôle of government in all major projects, especially in defence (including satellites and supersonic aircraft), construction (the Channel Tunnel), education, social welfare and overseas development, all point in the same direction.

3. As a moral force, the Socialist critique of capitalist materialism is also making a greater impact both in advanced and under-developed countries. More and more people are rejecting the idea that you can deny the intrinsic worth of a man by assessing his needs and his status according to his wealth.

4. As an historical movement socialism seems as likely to displace capitalism as capitalism did feudalism. And with the death of Stalin one of the major obstacles to the spread of Socialist ideas in Western societies has been removed. While Stalin lived socialism was often equated with the type of post-revolutionary dictatorship which had developed in Russia. Many of those potential Socialists who believed passionately in personal freedom were frightened away from the idea of socialism by this cruel aberration.

Now more and more people are coming to realise what benefits may accrue from using Socialist analysis and techniques in the context of their own society. No one in the Labour Party intends to be enslaved by a political theology embracing a completely fixed outlook on life. Ritualism is just as absurd in the practice of politics as it is in the practice of religion. The important thing is to feel free to draw on the experience of Socialist societies and not to be frightened away just because they are Socialist. This is the ideological issue that is involved in the choice that has to be made this autumn. And it is much better to be led by men who have tried to analyse the society in which they live and have some light to guide them towards their objectives than by those who prefer to operate in a quagmire of ad hockery.

THE RADICAL LEFT

January 17, 1964

WHEN HAROLD WILSON goes to Birmingham on Sunday to make his first major speech this year he will be armed with a secret weapon. The best description of this weapon comes from David Howell, Tory candidate for Dudley, writing in *Crossbow*. This is what he says: "What one resents particularly, when fighting at the constituency level, is not only to find that many excellent local professional people in their twenties and thirties are on the other side, but that they now assume that this is the only respectable place to be."

Mr Howell has pinpointed what many political correspondents have missed: the simple fact that a majority of the most creative people in Britain—scientists, artists, architects, academics, writers and sociologists—are now on the Left. All too often in the past their talent and ability have been underrated and ill-used. In less than a year as leader, Harold Wilson has mobilised them for the Labour Party and demonstrated that the release of energy of which he speaks so often can actually take place.

How was it achieved? The answer is simple. Labour has approached these people, not with a megaphone, shouting its own views, but with a sensitive microphone through which it can hear what they have to say. And as a result hundreds and hundreds of them have become involved in backroom work designed to help a Labour Government. Even Kennedy, with his huge New Frontier task forces, never commanded such a formidable army of brains as are now at Wilson's disposal.

There are groups and individuals working on a host of issues from legal reform and educational broadcasting, to the use of computers for urban planning. The theme of science has caught the imagination of the universities and the conferences that are being held for the "exchange of ideas" with university faculties have been an unqualified success.

Nor is the idea of science confined to the select band of PhDs and research workers. It means applying our minds to all our contemporary problems and thinking them out afresh. This has just as much appeal to executives, professional and skilled workers as it does to the boffins, and, as the Bow Group is now discovering, the response to this theme has been astonishing.

This fact is far more important than its electoral advantages for Labour might imply. For it provides a practical demonstration of the way in which the widening gulf between the original thinkers in society and the Government can be bridged. The galloping obsolescence from which Britain now suffers can be attributed as much to this gulf as to any other factor. So can the disillusionment that has grown with it.

It isn't only the Conservatives who are now feeling the pinch. The Liberals are even more gravely threatened. They had hoped to pick up support from all those younger people who had become disgruntled with the turgid rate of progress in Conservative Britain. Now they find many of these people being attracted straight to Labour, and they are beginning to suspect that the Orpington man, like the Piltdown man, was a hoax.

The Liberals suffer from two other disabilities in their appeal to this important category of people. The first is of their own making and arose from their early and uncritical championing of Britain's entry into the Common Market. Indeed, they pioneered the defeatism which Macmillan was later led to accept—namely that Britain alone could have no future. Those who believed that should not be surprised if their credentials for leadership are scrutinised rather carefully.

The second disability from which the Liberals suffer arises from the nature of their own objectives—to replace Labour as the principal opposition to the Tories. If such a plan is to succeed, another Tory victory is needed next time and as Mr Frank Byers has said : "It will be a pity if Labour wins." Those who want a radical change in Britain can therefore hardly be expected to vote for a party that might be secretly praying for a Tory victory. So the radical trek—like the one that Megan Lloyd-George and Dingle Foot have taken in the past—from Liberal to Labour, has begun all over again.

In short, we are entering a period of political history when a united radical Labour Left with a strong appeal to the young, the skilled and the dedicated, is drawing together under Harold Wilson's leadership. At the same time, the Right is divided into at least three parts: the Tory Establishment led by the Prime Minister, the disillusioned Tory progressives led by Iain Macleod, and the ex-Conservatives led by Jo Grimond who finds himself uncomfortably poised at the top of a pyramid of support that is losing its radical element to Labour.

A Labour Government, once elected, will strengthen this radical pull even more, while the Liberal Party machine will find itself wooed by the Conservative opposition to sign a Lib-Con alliance to get Labour out. One wonders how long a man like Jeremy Thorpe, for example, would be prepared to stay in such an embarrassing position.

These, then, are the foundations on which Harold Wilson can build his winning coalition. To do it successfully he must share with a wider public the excitement that he has created within the Labour Party at the prospect of regeneration and reconstruction to which he has set his hand. As he begins this task in Birmingham he will find himself in line with Labour leaders of the past, who have convinced each generation in turn that the only effective instrument for social change that exists in Britain is the Labour Party.

CITIZENS FOR LABOUR

May 1, 1964

THE CORRESPONDENCE IN *The Guardian* this week under the rather misleading title of "Intellectuals and the Labour Party" has opened up an issue of the greatest significance for future political organisation on the Left in Britain. Mr Wright said that "the intellectual seems confined within boundaries of his own making" and another writer suggested that there were many people who were sympathetic but "do not want to commit themselves fully to such an organised and disciplined body as the Labour Party". Taken together, these points alone amount to an invitation to the Labour Party to think again about the nature of its traditional machinery.

Ever since it was founded, the party has worked almost entirely on the basis of direct or affiliated membership. You are either a member of the Labour Party or you are not. If you are, then you have a full say in discussing and deciding policy, choosing candidates for the council or for Parliament. If you are not, you don't. Labour supporters feature only as promises on the canvass cards to be approached for money or help—or to vote—at election times.

Has this conception of political organisation been outdated by events? It would certainly not be unique if it had. Technical change is outdating institutions just as rapidly as it is outdating industrial methods. It is clear that institutional reform in government, Parliament, local government and the Law, has got to be tackled in the next five years. Political organisers should not be surprised, therefore, if the hurricane of re-examination engulfs them as well.

In one respect the existing party structure is obviously right. So long as political parties can be freely organised it is quite natural that they should limit full rights to those who are actually members and not extend them to those who, for one reason or another, do not wish to assume the obligations that membership involves. That is why all the talk about primary elections to select party candidates on the American model is so absurd. Why should someone who is not a member of a political party have any say in choosing the candidates for that party? And if the "party candidate" was imposed on a party by a majority of non-party votes in a primary, how would you stop a party that wished to choose its own candidate from putting him up as well?

The real question is not whether the Labour Party is entitled to run itself as it does, but whether new methods of organisation might not strengthen it still further. If there really are millions of people who would like to help but who do not see themselves fitting into the membership pattern, it might be wise to experiment with new techniques.

The intellectuals (so called) have in fact always played a full rôle in the party. The Fabian Society has been one natural focus for those who felt they had knowledge or experience to contribute to policy-making. The next Labour Government—like its predecessor in 1945—will be able to draw on the massive work done by Fabians and others who have made good use of the years in the wilderness. In addition to this, a wider group of intellectuals have been called into service over the past year. The highly successful "two-way traffic in ideas" conferences held in different centres on science and higher education have drawn in many people who are not members of the Labour Party. They were attracted because the party was obviously more anxious to hear what they had to say than to tell them what they ought to think.

There is undoubtedly scope for a further development here. Effective policy research in the future will increasingly depend

on calling in the services of those with specialist knowledge regardless of their political affiliations, leaving the party to decide for itself which recommendations it will adopt for its programme. This is equally true of local Labour groups serving on municipal or county councils, which need to refresh themselves with new ideas all the time.

Quite aside from the rôle of intellectuals, there is a wider question to be considered. How, if at all, can you associate those who, though not actively interested in policy and organisation, passionately want to see a Labour Government elected? As the election approaches and more and more people are reached through television, meetings and advertising, this group of enthusiastic and committed supporters grows and so does their desire to help. What can you do about them? Ideally, it would be perhaps best if they all became paying members of the party. But if they did, it would not, by itself, convert them from supporters into activists, as only a few of them would wish to participate in the full rights of membership which would then be open to them.

In the end I suspect the party will have to meet this need by sponsoring a nationwide "Citizens for Labour" movement to reach these people. It could of course have no policy-making function : those who want to do that should join as members. Nor could it create a separate organisation, for that would simply duplicate the work that is already being done. But it would—just by listing names—provide that degree of association with the party which hosts of people, besides intellectuals, would like to have, giving them an opportunity to contribute their money and time and ideas more informally.

Nor should we think of this simply as a campaign technique. The success of a Labour Government will depend on the extent to which it can excite the imagination of millions of people and then use their energy to carry through the regeneration of Britain. These are the real Citizens for Labour.

HOME'S MANIFESTO

December 13, 1963

IT IS NOW clear that the Conservatives intend to fight the general election on three main issues: prosperity, an independent British deterrent, and the modernisation of Britain. The anti-nationalisation campaign which was launched after Harold Wilson's election as Leader of the Labour Party aroused so little interest that it has been quietly dropped. But how effective are these other themes likely to be?

Economic prosperity and expansion began so recently that its effects have hardly been felt before the warning voices are beginning to be heard. The Chancellor is clearly anxious about the dangers of inflation, and the risks of an economic crisis are so real that the Government may have to go to the country early in order to avert them.

If, by any chance, they were to be returned to power there would almost certainly be immediate cuts in Government expenditure and investment. Mr Selwyn Lloyd is already in training for his return, wholly vindicated in his pessimism, to take over the Treasury again. This will be the shortest pre-election boom in the postwar Conservative campaign series and probably, as a result, the least effective.

The maintenance of an independent British nuclear deterrent may be even less likely to prove a vote-winner. Polaris submarines are unfortunately neither independent nor British and create a far greater dependence upon America, over a prolonged period, than would be necessary without them. Most defence experts are agreed that such a force adds nothing

to Western strength and is incapable of deterring anyone without the backing of US nuclear weapons.

Nevertheless we are now being asked to believe that it is necessary to buy us a ticket of admission into important international conferences, that without it Britain would never have been at the nuclear test-ban talks, and hence, by implication, that without Britain the talks would not have succeeded. Perhaps the best answer to this has come from Lord Boothby in his recent lecture at the Imperial Defence College where he said : "To contend, as Mr Macmillan did, that our possession of an alleged independent deterrent enabled us to participate in the negotiations which led to the test-ban agreement is absolute nonsense."

The truth is that the test-ban agreement was signed because it met the deepest national interests of the Russians and the Americans. Even if Britain had been as hostile to it as de Gaulle was, it would still have been signed. And why, if the British bomb is really as effective as the Prime Minister claims it is, did it not qualify London for an extension into the hot telephone line between Moscow and Washington? Sir Alec will be getting the engaged signal when he tries to telephone the major Powers. The only real status symbol worth having today is a "hot telephone". Britain has not got one.

There remains, therefore, the issue of modernisation. Under the Conservatives, we are told, Britain is to be brought up to date. This theme, which first appeared in Labour Party statements nearly three years ago, was taken up at the Liberal conference at Llandudno in 1962 and now, at last, it has appeared as the official policy of the Government.

One almost insuperable difficulty, from the Prime Minister's point of view, in making this policy credible is the fact that he and his colleagues have been in power for over 12 years and the obsolescence from which they plan to deliver us is an

obsolescence which they have themselves allowed to develop in their years of office.

It will be very hard to persuade the public that their change of heart is now genuine. Just as Mr Macmillan was the natural leader of a Britain that was congratulating itself on "never having had it so good", so Mr Wilson is the natural leader of a Britain that has at last set its course towards reform and radical change.

A great surge of promises for future expenditure and a sudden conversion to planning do not really constitute a policy of modernisation at all. It is hard to take Neddy seriously when one knows, for example, that the Beeching Plan for the railways, involving major decisions about public investment in a basic industry, was never submitted to Neddy at all. If planning is to have any real meaning it must be comprehensive. Again, regional development means little if it only applies to areas of unemployment. The congestion of the Midlands and the South offers just as much evidence of bad planning as the desolation of Scotland and the North-East.

Moreover, it is not just our policies that are now obsolete but our institutions as well. The present machinery of national and local government and the process of decision-making by those in authority is clumsy beyond belief. Our legal system is creaking, and our educational structure is out of date. On these points, the Government is significantly silent.

What Britain needs today is more than modernisation. It needs regeneration. What is wrong is that so much talent is wasted and so many opportunities are missed because people are not able to develop their full potential. The regeneration of Britain can only be achieved by releasing energy now bottled up by outdated traditions and methods and the maintenance of obsolete privileges. If Britain is to be made an exciting country in which to live, the Government has got to

create conditions which permit this vitality to surge from below.

Whatever else may be said for Sir Alec Douglas-Home no one could accuse him of wanting to stimulate this process. Conservatives still conceive of the rôle of government as doing things for us. What I suspect the British people now really want, more than anything, is a government that will allow them to do things for themselves. The social revolution of 1964 must be a do-it-yourself revolution or it will be nothing at all.

POLLSTERS AND POLITICS

March 13, 1964

THIS WEEK AIMS OF INDUSTRY directed a massive broadside at Harold Wilson, misfired, and almost succeeded in eliminating themselves (and National Opinion Polls) as a serious political force in the process. The background to this extraordinary episode contains so many lessons for the politicians, the pressure groups, the pollsters and the public that it deserves detailed study.

Aims of Industry is one of a number of Conservative-front organisations, whose principal object is to prevent the election of a Labour Government. According to David Butler and Richard Rose, in *The British General Election of 1959*, these organisations, together, spent about four times as much on advertising before the last election as did the Conservative Party itself and 14 times as much as the Labour Party spent on its public relations in the same period. To be precise, Aims of Industry alone spent £125,282 during 1959. Last June one of its officials was reported as saying : "This time will be very different. We are making no bones about it. We are aiming at very big stuff."

When I wrote to the secretary, Mr E. C. L. Hulbert-Powell, in September 1963 to ask him where all the money was coming from he replied : "Subscriptions and/or donations to Aims of Industry are strictly confidential and I am not allowed by my council to reveal the name of any subscribers other than those who are on the council...." Since then this secret pressure group has mobilised all the resources of modern advertising

to build antinationalisation up as a vote-winner for the Conservatives in the election.

As part of this campaign National Opinion Polls were paid to do a survey, the results of which were published on Tuesday. Altogether 2,503 electors (or 0.007 per cent of the total electorate) in 100 constituencies were asked 30 questions and their answers led Aims of Industry to declare that "Two out of every three voters are opposed to more nationalisation" and that if Labour were to carry out its plans it would be "an affront to democracy". In huge paid advertisements publishing the figures they asked in bold type: "So why do you want it, Mr Wilson?"

A closer analysis of the full National Opinion Polls figures reveals some interesting facts that Aims of Industry naturally did not want to publicise. Here are some of them:

1. Only 49.7 per cent—or less than half those questioned—are opposed to nationalisation in principle (Table 13).
2. 54.6 per cent thought that nationalisation would make the country more prosperous or would make no difference (Table 16).
3. 77.6 per cent of those questioned thought that more nationalisation would make them better off or would have no effect on them personally (Table 17).
4. 65 per cent want to see more planning and only 9.2 per cent want to see less (Table 6).
5. Only 2.3 per cent think nationalisation is the most important issue in this election and 36.8 per cent of those questioned think it is one of the two least important issues (Table 1).

All these figures, like those picked out for quotation by Aims of Industry, are highly selective. They constitute no more of an argument in favour of nationalisation than the figures handpicked by Aims of Industry constitute an argument against it. In fact, both illustrate with great force the absurdity

of trying to use commercial market research methods as a guide to the formulation of national policy. It is one thing to ask people which way they intend to vote and publish the results as a guide to their personal preferences and prejudices. It is quite another thing to seek snap judgments from people on a few isolated elements in intensely complicated policy questions. It would be so easy to produce a public opinion poll showing that an overwhelming majority of the electorate was in favour both of lower taxation and, at the same time, greatly increased expenditure on schools, roads and cancer research.

An extra error creeps into these polls, if the questions are heavily loaded to get the desired answer. It is astonishing that National Opinion Polls should lend itself to a questionnaire which included such crude alternatives as "Which do you think is best for the country as a whole? (a) Free Enterprise; (b) Nationalisation; (c) State Control" (Table 5). Those questioned predictably preferred the first. But what would the replies have been if they had been asked to choose between (a) Commercial control for private profit; (b) Public enterprise; (c) Planned expansion?

Some measure of the significance of question phraseology is revealed in one of the questions (Table 6) which shows that 36.9 per cent want more public ownership as against 22.1 per cent who want more nationalisation. Similarly 65 per cent want more planning and only 25 per cent want more controls.

The most devastating exposé of the whole operation was contained in Table 11, that 23.5 per cent of those questioned thought that a Labour Government would nationalise mining. Somebody really should tell them that it was nationalised 18 years ago. One wonders how many of the 66 per cent who prefer Free Enterprise do so because they are so satisfied with the way the coal industry is now being run.

If it is bad—as it is—for those in politics to follow the party line slavishly even when they think it is wrong, how much worse

would it be to follow public opinion polls slavishly? If every MP were to allow them to decide his attitude, what would happen to Parliament and what would elections be all about? Both Parliament and elections would gradually be replaced by perpetual market research surveys (and perpetual mass advertisement campaigns) financed by big business.

But this survey will certainly have been worth while if its lessons are learned. Aims of Industry and its "confidential subscribers" had better not waste any more money. Tory Central Office would be well advised to drop antinationalisation and start boasting about the Channel Tunnel (which is to be nationalised). The pollsters had better stick to surveys about the relative merits of detergents. The public had better be a lot more cautious about public opinion polls. And politicians of all parties would be well advised to advocate the policies in which they believe and leave it to the electors to choose which one they prefer. As often happens, what is simplest is best.

MONEY FOR POLITICS

June 26, 1964

THE GREAT DEBATE about secret contributions by business firms to the Conservative Party and its various front organisations raises such important legal and constitutional issues that it must not be dismissed as a mere slanging match between the two parties in this feverish pre-election period. To prevent this from happening we must, first, be clear in our own minds as to what this controversy is not about.

It is not about the right of any individual to subscribe his own money to support the party in which he believes. Anybody, in a free society, has an absolute right to do this and to contribute to any organisation which is campaigning for causes that he thinks right. This includes Aims of Industry, the British Peace Committee, the Abortion Law Reform Society, or the Movement for Colonial Freedom. No one is challenging that right and it is not an issue.

Nor is this debate anything to do with the law governing election expenses. This is regulated by the Representation of the People Acts which lay down the amounts that may be spent by, and on behalf of, candidates standing in elections. Election law is concerned solely to prevent corrupt practices. How the candidate gets his money is a problem for him, but even if he spent stolen money he would commit no offence *under election law* unless the total exceeded what is allowed. To say that business contributions to particular candidates are legal in that sense is meaningless. No one denies it.

Leaving these irrelevancies aside, there are five major issues

that are important and that ought to be publicly discussed and argued.

1. The right of shareholders to know how the directors are spending their money. Without this information they cannot exercise their rights effectively. If the idea of a property-owning democracy means anything at all it must mean the preservation of the basic rights of shareholders. Any member of a trade union can contract out of contributing to a political fund. Even if shareholders are to be denied this right, there is no valid reason why they should not know that a political fund exists.

2. The duty of directors to treat shareholders' money as money held in trust. If, as Mr Boyd-Carpenter said, some companies are "bound", in their own interest, to support the Conservative Party, then the last argument for secrecy disappears. Where the case for such political contributions is so self-evident what excuse can there be for concealing the sums involved? Supposing a shareholder thinks that the firm should increase its contribution, how can he even do that unless he knows what is paid at present?

3. The protection of the revenue is also at stake. The community should not be forced to subsidise political contributions by allowing them as legitimate expenses, for tax purposes. This is an easy line to draw. A statutory definition already exists in the Conservative Government's Television Act of 1954 which prohibits the broadcasting of any advertisement "by or on behalf of any body the objects whereof are wholly or mainly of a religious or political nature" or "which is directed towards any religious or political end". If applied for tax purposes it would not prevent shareholders and directors from contributing as individuals, or collectively, provided that the collective contributions come from a political fund divorced from the trading activities of the firm or partnership.

4. The dangers of undue political influence are also involved. Far more serious than the payments by individual firms direct

to the Conservative Party is the emergence of collecting agencies like British United Industrialists who gather the money into a central fund, which they control, and from which they make enormous grants. The men who run this operation become paymasters on a massive scale, and are in a very much stronger position when dealing with the Conservative leadership.

5. There is also a risk of corruption in Government contracts. What happens if a firm receiving a Government contract, grant, or subsidy is approached by a Conservative official asking for money for the party? The board of directors may fear to refuse, and yet by agreeing to do so they run the risk of straight political corruption. Just as Government contractors are disqualified from election to Parliament, they should also be prohibited from making direct or indirect political contributions to any party funds.

These issues ought to concern people in all parties and win wide support for the legislation a Labour Government will introduce to bring the facts into the open. Publicity is always the surest weapon against corruption and the pressures exerted by secret lobbies. Professor Samuel Finer, in the final sentences of his book *Anonymous Empire* written six years ago, made an impassioned case for such a bill. "This secrecy, this twilight of parliamentary debate, envelopes the Lobby in its own obscurity. Through this, above all, the lobbies become—as far as the general public is concerned—faceless, voiceless, unidentifiable; in brief, anonymous. Light! *More light!*"

THE RADICAL RIGHT

June 5, 1964

SENATOR GOLDWATER'S VICTORY in the California Republican primary has come as something of a shock, even to many British experts on American politics. It appals and surprises them that so naive, reactionary, and wild a man should command such wide support. He is not at all one of those nice respectable Americans who drool over the heritage of the English-speaking peoples at Pilgrim Dinners. Nor is he like those able, modest academics whom one meets at Harvard, or Princeton and who seems so grateful to have been invited to dinner at an Oxbridge high table. He is so different, too, from those tough, young New Frontiersmen who gathered around Kennedy when he came to power three years ago.

For many British visitors in America these are the only types they meet and they cannot understand where a man like Senator Goldwater gets his support. They never visit the provincial cities and the small towns where most Americans live, nor are they exposed to the same super-patriotic influences which wash over each generation of schoolchildren as they pass into manhood. They do not understand that the great American myth of capitalist opportunity for all is still widely believed, and that all the advertising, public relations, and social pressures maintain it. They do not understand that the idea of an invincible America took an awful knock when the first Sputnik went into orbit. Millions of Americans cannot accept the idea that there is a limitation on American power, and they attribute her foreign reverses to the influence of Communist traitors or weak-kneed pink Liberals who have

somehow established themselves in power in Washington. For them the cold war is as acute as it was in Stalin's day and they yearn for someone who will lay down the law to Russia and China.

These are the sort of people who voted for Goldwater on Tuesday. He is very unlikely to become President. But he has solidified and revealed the strength of the Radical Right. Its influence on other Republican candidates and even on the President himself will now be much greater. The demand for tough action against Castro or a deeper involvement in South-East Asia could easily mount between now and the election with all its attendant dangers.

There is a wider lesson to be drawn, too. For years the Left has been under a microscope. The witch-hunting in America focused attention on the whole spectrum of Communists, fellow-travellers, Socialists and Liberals there. In Britain, too, it has been the Left that has received the closest attention. Every detail of the arguments in the Labour Party has been retailed by the press, diagnosed, discussed and mulled over. The Bevanites, the revisionists, and the unilateralists, have, each in turn, been analysed *ad nauseam*. But surprisingly little has been said or written about the Radical Right.

One reason for this is that Conservative Governments, on both sides of the Atlantic, have found the Radical Right to be an embarrassment to them. They thought they could get on better without it. Eisenhower projected himself as a kindly father figure, a near-constitutional monarch, whose me-tooism looked less opportunist than Governor Dewey's. Macmillan preferred a slightly different image of the clever Edwardian uncle who concealed his political skill beneath an affectation of senility, yet managed to win the admiration of the multitude as the unflappable Super-Mac. For both of them nothing succeeded like success. But neither could cope with failure, and when it came the Radical Right emerged from hiding to reject

their inactivity and compromises which had swamped true conservatism and robbed it of its virility. Goldwater spoke boldly and clearly and won a hearing from those who were sick of the mish-mash into which American politics had degenerated.

In Britain, too, the Radical Right is now emerging. Enoch Powell honestly appeals to those who want to feel that Conservatism has a principle behind it and is not just a machine for the retention of power by those who were born to rule. Sir Oswald Mosley, discredited as he is politically, has, I suspect, a far wider following on the colour question than any of us would dare to admit to ourselves. Mr Edward Martell and his Freedom Group appeal to a radical Right-wing audience who are not so different from those who elected Senator Goldwater. Indeed, in Mr Harold Wilson's own constituency his Conservative opponent has accepted Martell's support and by implication his policies, which include the introduction of intelligence tests for voters, the abolition of family allowances, the sentencing of those who advocate strike action and the banning of public marches and demonstrations.

If it is wrong to call these tendencies fascist now, it is quite legitimate to believe that if they became dominant in America or Britain events could lead in that direction. Those who think that the defeat of the Nazis has for ever ended such a possibility may be naïve. Even Eisenhower warned against the military and industrial complex whose influence he feared in America. The giant political power of big business, in Britain, working anonymously through Aims of Industry to safeguard the private interests of a handful of financial magnates, is already evident. Racial conflict could inject new and dangerous elements into the situation. The Radical Right needs watching.

PART II

THE WORLD IN REVOLUTION

BEYOND THE COLD WAR

December 6, 1963

ONE OF THE worst features of the cold war was the attempt, on both sides, to divide the world into goodies and baddies like some perpetual Western serial on television. The free world (or peace-loving Socialist camp) was always facing an implacably hostile and monolithic Communist (or imperialist) conspiracy. We were all told that an unbridgeable ideological gulf divided us from each other and that even if war could be averted we must prepare ourselves for an unending struggle for the hearts and minds of men. It was almost a religious crusade.

Looking back on it now from the relative safety of the *détente* we can see things a bit more clearly. It never was primarily an ideological struggle. By no stretch of the imagination could South Africa, Portugal, or Spain ever be termed part of the free world. They were recruited into our military alliance to strengthen it in the face of a military threat. National security was always the dominant consideration in the minds of Russia and America and their allies. That was why Moscow established the Ulbricht régime and overthrew the Hungarian uprising in 1956 and that was why Eden attacked Suez and Kennedy authorised the Bay of Pigs.

What has happened to change it all? Just this. The nuclear arms race created such a grave common danger to both sides that it also revealed a new-found common interest in survival strong enough to make an agreement between them possible. On the two most important issues of our time—positive co-existence and the non-spread of nuclear weapons—there has

now developed a Soviet-American alliance under whose protection we all live in relative peace. Even Kennedy's death is unlikely to disturb it because it is built on the realities of self-interest in Washington as well as Moscow. It is a comforting thought.

Unfortunately this limited Pax Soviet-Americana is not sufficient, by itself, to give the world security and peace. What it does do is to remove one of the major obstacles to the settlement of world problems and revive again the hopes we had when the UN was created in 1945. The problems that have emerged since then are infinitely more complex and far more dangerous than those posed by the cold war which for so long blanketed them beneath the global strategy of the super-Powers.

The uncompleted process of decolonisation, the explosive racial issue, the widening gap between rich and poor—all open up terrifying new prospects for conflict. The division in the world that really matters now is the division between the rich whites and the poor non-whites, between the haves and the have-nots.

It is in this conflict that China is beginning to play such an important part, preaching militancy to the non-European under-developed world whose poverty is acute and whose prospects are bleak. China can, as she did this week, point proudly to the fact that she is developing without any outside help whatsoever.

She offers self-respect to those who follow the same hard course in preference to the humiliation of eternal dependence on the charity of the rich nations. This is the message Chou En-lai will be preaching on his African tour and it will get a sympathetic hearing.

China does not believe in peaceful coexistence because she herself does not enjoy it. Chiang's armies in Formosa, armed by America, are harassing her coastline and for ever threatening a return to civil war. And the American economic block-

ade is so tight that it is crippling such capacity for development as she possesses even from her own limited resources. No one should be surprised if China's hatred for America carries the Moscow-Peking split to breaking-point. Nor should we welcome such an event, even though it may appear to consolidate the Soviet-American alliance still further. For in the long run the world will be a far more dangerous place if a hungry and insecure China is kept outside the international community.

Even the crudest motives of self-interest should now be leading us to think out ways of developing coexistence and co-operation with a prosperous, secure and strong China, before this new cold war begins to engulf us.

Britain, which was among the first to recognise the new régime nearly 14 years ago and which, through Hongkong, maintains far closer trade relations with her than either Russia or America, has a special rôle to play in keeping the channels of communication open with Mao Tse-tung. A British Government that campaigned vigorously for justice for China, for ending the blockade, for admitting her to the UN and for sending economic help would soon command the backing of a world majority strong enough to overcome America's old hostility and Russia's new hostility towards Peking.

In 1945, when the UN was formed in San Francisco, it was built on the assumption that the war-time alliance between the Big Five would be carried on through the years of peace. These nations, permanent members of the Security Council, were America, Russia, Britain, France and China. Without China the UN can never develop into the instrument by which mankind builds for itself a lasting peace. It is high time we said this plainly and started to act as if we meant to make it true.

BRITAIN'S WORLD ROLE

April 3, 1964

THE SPRING OF 1964 may well mark the end of an era in world affairs that will rank in the history books along with the Russian Revolution, the defeat of nazism and the beginnings of the cold war. The events of this last week have shattered the pattern of international relationships which have shaped our thinking for the last 10 or 15 years.

By far the most significant of these events is the now open hostility between Moscow and Peking. After years of strain and tension within the alliance the differences have exploded into an exchange of abuse at the highest level. On Tuesday the *People's Daily* wrote: "It is high time to repudiate and liquidate Khrushchev's revisionism which is leading the Soviet Union on the road back to capitalism."

While we await Khrushchev's reply we can reflect on the comments made by Mr Gafurov, chief Soviet delegate at the Afro-Asian conference in Algiers, who said on his return through Paris "... the Chinese want to unite the yellow and black races against the whites whoever they may be... the National Socialist propaganda of the Chinese is not only dangerous for the Soviet Union but for all countries of Europe and elsewhere. It is hatred they are fermenting".

Meanwhile, Senator Fulbright in a major speech in the American Senate last week attacked the "myths" which blind America to the "new realities" and appealed to his colleagues to "dare to think about 'unthinkable things' because when things become 'unthinkable' thinking stops and action becomes mindless".

Fulbright argued for a complete re-examination of existing American policy towards Russia, questioning the "self-evident truth" that "the devil resides immutably in Moscow", towards China where "an elaborate vocabulary of make-believe has become compulsory" and where "inflexible policies" have "an aura of mystical sanctity". He even queried present policy towards Cuba and went on to say: "In other Latin-American countries the power of ruling oligarchies is so solidly established and their ignorance so great that there seems little prospect of accomplishing economic growth or social reform by means short of the forceful overthrow of established authorities."

In one sense there is nothing new about these Chinese, Soviet and American views. They have been developing slowly and have often been expressed privately. What is important is that they are now public knowledge and as they are debated vigorously all over the world they will release major new forces.

While we must all feel a sense of profound relief that the rigidity of mind and policy which we have endured in recent years is at last being broken down, there are appalling new dangers in the developing situation. We shall gain nothing from a new cold war between rich, militarily strong whites led by America and Russia and the non-white majority of the world's population pledged, under Chinese leadership, to global revolution. Yet that is just what will inevitably happen if China continues to be isolated and the basic problems of racial oppression and world poverty are not effectively tackled.

The South African tyranny, the Rhodesian crisis, continuing colonialism in Southern Arabia and the oppressive military dictatorships in Latin America will all explode in time and polarise the world into these new alignments. It will be no comfort to see Soviet-Chinese differences erupting into frontier incidents or the breach of diplomatic relations. Nor could any sane person welcome the evolution of a Soviet-American

military alliance directed against China. But these are not such very remote possibilities.

It is sad, but not at all surprising, that the present British Government has nothing useful or creative to say at this juncture. The reason is obvious. Sir Alec Douglas-Home is firmly entrenched on the wrong side of both the old and the new line-up in the world. As a committed cold-war warrior of the Dulles school he trails far behind Fulbright in perceiving the new possibilities of an East-West *détente*. As an Imperialist of Victorian vintage he continues military support for South Africa, has virtually abdicated his responsibilities in Rhodesia and is currently engaged in gunboat diplomacy to retain Aden. He intensely dislikes the UN and is, at best, neutralist on the all-important racial issue. It is no wonder that this country's reputation in the world has touched rock-bottom.

Yet with a little imagination and some real faith and energy Britain could play a most helpful rôle in this new situation.

1. We could take the lead in working to reunify East and West Europe, first by nuclear disengagement and later by encouraging close economic and political co-operation.

As Soviet-American tension eases there is a real chance of liberating Europe from the double straitjacket into which NATO and the Warsaw Pact have sought to confine it.

2. We should also take the lead in campaigning for a policy of justice for China: to seat her at the UN, to wind up the trade blockade and to secure the ending of American military intervention in Formosa, Quemoy, Matsu and the Straits.

3. We should, both by example and through the UN, hand over the remaining European colonial possessions to their own people and prepare drastic international action to liberate South Africa.

4. We should seek to strengthen the UN in its peace-keeping, disarmament and economic development rôles which are fundamental for the future survival of mankind.

5. We should, above all, keep lines of communication open even through the new Iron Curtains that will soon divide us. The task of reconciliation is impossible if we forget how to speak to each other. That is what we forgot in the hard years of the cold war and that is why the myths we are now dispersing were able to grow. We must not forget this lesson as the barrage of recrimination and abuse mounts again. The new myths—which have heavy undertones of colour—will prove far more dangerous than the old.

COMMUNICATIONS

May 22, 1964

IF ANYONE WERE looking for an example of the way in which science has outpaced man's capacity to use it wisely, this week offered a rich field for study. We had the Unesco report which revealed the rapid growth of press, radio, cinema and television all over the world. Next we had the discovery of 40 mikes in the American Embassy in Moscow, and the row over the tape recording of Dingle Foot's consultations with Dr Banda. We heard about tiny closed-circuit television cameras, micro-miniature radio transmitters, and Laser beams for outdoor eavesdropping at long range. The world has developed the most fantastic techniques for communication and still doesn't know how to communicate effectively.

To start with, our coverage of foreign news is appallingly inadequate. The handling of the Aden crisis by the press and television has been of the crudest kind. It is easy to see why the Government wants to build it up this way for its own political advantage. But it is harder to see why there has been so little attempt to present the Arab case on Aden. All the material is there and yet the presentation of the arguments has been almost entirely one-sided. You cannot have an informed public opinion unless they are given access to the facts.

This is equally true of other countries. America is now a prisoner of its own mythology about Cuba and the real danger there in the next few months will arise from the presidential campaign rather than from anything that Dr Castro is likely to do. Similarly, both the Russians and the Chinese have become prisoners of the public opinion that they have created for

themselves. And between Moscow and Peking there is an almost complete communications block. People are told what they want to hear, and they want to hear what they have been told.

The same is true of most foreign broadcasting. The Voice of America, Radio Moscow, and Radio Peking put out material tailored to satisfy the prejudices of the countries from which they broadcast, instead of being angled to meet the needs of those at whom they are directed. This is the main reason why these broadcasts are usually so ineffective. Though the BBC Overseas Service is proud of its reputation for truthfulness, it is still regarded as an arm of foreign policy and I suspect that it does not make use of this country's greatest asset—free discussion—and broadcast highly critical comments of British policy from London. I can think of nothing more likely to win us an audience in Russia than a weekly comment on world affairs by a distinguished British Communist.

The other failure of communication today is on the personal level. It is astonishing that President Johnson and Premier Khrushchev, on whose decisions the immediate survival of mankind depends, should so rarely, if ever, meet each other. A "hot line" telephone link which guarantees an exchange whenever the world hovers on the brink of catastrophe is an improvement. But what is wanted far more is a cold telephone line to permit far more regular and informal discussions over a wide range of problems. With jet aircraft, there is no reason why top statesmen should not make a habit of frequent casual personal visits, free from the absurd build-up, glaring publicity, and almost inevitable disappointments that attach to old-fashioned Summit meetings.

The key to good communications lies in keeping the dialogue going all the time and on every issue. This has to be elevated into an article of faith that requires no detailed justification.

Parliament and the United Nations are often sneered at as mere talking-shops. But that is their real merit. It is the continual exchange of information and the interaction of ideas which ultimately produces some sort of understanding. If we think of communication in terms of shouting rather than listening, we throw away the greatest opportunity that it offers. Worse still, if we all build up in our own countries a public opinion based on a mythology so fragile that it cannot be exposed to a blast of argument from outside we become prisoners of our own failure. In a world where nuclear weapons have created a powerful common interest in common solutions for common problems, we still find that almost all the forces controlling communications are based on the idea of a natural, inevitable and permanent divergence of national interests. In short, the dialogue has hardly begun.

SHIPS FOR THE UN

March 6, 1964

AMID THE RISING clamour of cheap nuclear nationalism and phoney vote-catching patriotism which passes for tough statesmanship today, Harold Wilson's plan for a British naval contribution to the United Nations ought to capture the imagination of the whole post-war generation. For those of us whose childhood was overshadowed by the menace of war and whose youth was spent learning to kill and destroy, the flag-wagging hysteria of Lord Beaverbrook's newspapers is pathetic, irrelevant and totally obsolete.

Why does this generation believe in the United Nations and want to see it strengthened? The answer is very simple. Hard facts and cold realism dictate it. The new military technology which began in the laboratories of Los Alamos has outdated traditional machinery for settling international disputes. It is nuclear weapons and intercontinental missiles—not Harold Wilson's policy—that are destroying national sovereignty as a basis on which people can build security for themselves and their families.

Law and order, on which survival always depends, must therefore now be sought by other means. These are facts of life, available for anyone to see and only concealed from those who are blinded by wishful thinking. It will all seem so simple and obvious to the historians writing a century hence. They will wonder how anyone could have been so stupid as to have missed the significance of what is happening, just as we now wonder how Chamberlain and Home and Butler could have

been so blind to the menace of prewar German militarism.

The United Nations is a product of these new realities. Its imperfections stare us in the face. Of course it is still based on the membership of nation States pursuing their national interests. Of course Great Powers will disregard the rule of law when they feel their own security threatened. What Russia did in Hungary, and Britain at Suez, America attempted in Cuba. But each paid heavily for it and the price of national aggrandisement will rise sharply in the future. World opinion cannot be ignored today even by the greatest nations. The millions of dollars, roubles and pounds spent on overseas broadcasting and propaganda provides some measure of the cash value of goodwill, even to a nuclear giant. The self-discipline of the test-ban treaty shows the extent to which strong men are prepared to sacrifice sovereignty in the interests of international agreement.

We might also remember that Parliament was far from being perfect as an instrument of national government for most of its 700 years. Kings disregarded it, feudal lords ran it, big industrialists took it over, ordinary men and women were oppressed by it, and radicals despaired of it. But it kept going and it got stronger, and it became accepted because it was better than continual civil war. Finally the people conquered it. Only 18 years ago double voting was abolished, and when the hereditary peers are sent packing it will be fully democratic.

I believe in the United Nations for the same reason that I believe in Parliament. There is nothing else to believe in that offers the slightest hope of controlling the Doomsday machine that scientists have given to man. The choice before us is a steady progression towards world government or the fate of the Gadarene swine.

Harold Wilson's plan to earmark a powerful conventional naval force under British command to be made available for specific international peace-keeping marks a clear stage in our

slow progress towards an effective United Nations. Canada is planning a similar commitment. So are Denmark, Norway and Sweden. If the Security Council can really count on having at its disposal a force of this kind ready to move at a moment's notice, it will be a terrific step forwards. What small nation threatened by aggression from a neighbour, and offered international protection like this, would ever go back to the old technique of inviting in a Russian technical mission or asking for a goodwill visit from a nuclear power-packed American fleet? It can be very difficult to disentangle yourself from the protection of big Powers.

Will it infringe our sovereignty to offer our ships for this purpose? Certainly no more than this Government's existing commitments to keep troops in Germany, to align our V-bombers with NATO, or the permission it gave for an American nuclear base in Holy Loch that can fire its missiles without consultation with us. A mixed-manned United Nations naval peace force would make even more sense. But no doubt this would be attacked as treachery even by those who, like the Prime Minister, are now entering an experiment for a mixed-manned NATO force armed with Polaris missiles.

What then is left of patriotism? Just this: affection for the country of your birth, pride in its achievements, inspiration from its culture, enjoyment of its customs, and loyalty to its interests, firmly qualified by the certain knowledge that its security must be sought within a global framework.

Is this just the fantasy of an idealist? Not at all. Today's dreamers are those who live in the past, hate the present and are fearful of the future, like a crusader encased in armour and chained to a post by the prehistoric proprietor of the newspapers they read.

ANGLO-AMERICAN RELATIONS

February 21, 1964

WILL ANGLO-AMERICAN RELATIONS become a big issue in the general election? The Prime Minister will certainly try to present himself as the natural champion of the special relationship and custodian of the alliance. But, in fact, it is much more likely that a Labour Government will be able to achieve a better working relationship with Washington than we have had since 1951.

The Roosevelt-Churchill partnership during the war was certainly the high point of co-operation—even to the point of full exchange of nuclear information. In the very different atmosphere of the post-war world Truman and Attlee worked well together, too. The Marshall Plan to secure the recovery of Europe and the creation of NATO to defend it against the threat from Stalin's Russia owed much to Labour initiatives.

After the short-lived old comrades' reunion atmosphere that existed between Eisenhower and Churchill in 1953 and 1954 came the disastrous breach over Suez for which Eden was responsible. Thus, it was a Conservative Cabinet that disrupted the Anglo-American partnership, and revealed the fundamental anti-American feeling that exists in the British imperialistic Right. Eisenhower's distrust was mixed with contempt for the military inefficiency revealed by the Anglo-French invasion of Egypt, and the agonising reappraisal of Britain as principal ally began in Washington.

From then on American policy has shifted slowly towards closer links with West Germany and the special relationship

with Britain has begun to acquire that nostalgic flavour normally reserved for speeches about our common heritage at the Pilgrim dinners. With the arrival of young President Kennedy this process became even more accentuated. He began a cold reassessment of the realities of modern power, and in doing so came to share Dean Acheson's view that a Tory Britain was played out.

Kennedy urged Macmillan to join the Common Market, reluctantly assented to the Nassau Agreement, and promptly produced the idea of a mixed-manned nuclear force quite contradictory in character to the idea of an independent British deterrent. Despite our V-bombers there was no real consultations at the brink during the Cuban crisis. At the United Nations Kennedy's sympathy for the aspirations of the newly emerging nations was in marked contrast to Sir Alec Douglas-Home's frank hostility to them.

After Macmillan's resignation and Kennedy's assassination some naïve enthusiasts for Home began speaking of him as the natural leader of the West to whom, so it was argued, President Johnson would turn for wise advice and leadership on a host of world issues which he did not fully understand. No one says that now. The very abrupt reception accorded to the Prime Minister in Washington contrasted most noticeably with the elaborate Texas festivities specially laid on to celebrate the visit of Chancellor Erhard a short while ago. The customary discretion of diplomacy has spared us an inside account of what Lyndon Johnson, the glad-handing New Dealer, really thinks of Sir Alec Douglas-Home. Perhaps it is as well. Relations between Washington and London are colder than they have been since Eden's time. Military aid has been cut off and there is even talk of a trade boycott.

What are the prospects if Harold Wilson becomes Prime Minister? The differences on China's admission to the UN and trade with Cuba will continue. A Labour Cabinet will certainly regard the mixed-manned nuclear force as an expensive

political gimmick with little military value. All that is true, and such strains as derive from it are not likely to be relieved.

But in other respects Anglo-American co-operation is likely to be much easier under Wilson than it could ever be under Home. The renegotiation of the Nassau Agreement would certainly be regarded in Washington as very helpful in their campaign to stop the proliferation of nuclear weapons. For Britain it would buy greater independence in foreign policy than could ever be achieved while we depend on the American Congress to authorise the supply of the Polaris missiles on which the whole "independent" project depends. A Labour Government would also find itself working much more closely with America at the United Nations. The appointment of a top-ranking political Minister at the Security Council (comparable with Adlai Stevenson in the American Government) would lead to more joint action in the UN, on issues of colonial freedom, human rights, peace-keeping, and help for underdeveloped areas.

But perhaps the greatest improvement will flow from the revived interest that would begin when this country was seen, itself, to have rejected the old and to have set out on a new course with a new sense of purpose. Wilson's New Britain will have far more in common with F.D.R.'s New Deal and Kennedy's New Frontier America than Home's England ever could. For example, much of the inspiration of Labour's Socialist policy for comprehensive schools, university expansion, and scientific and technical advance, comes from the pioneering work done over there.

Similarly the new legislation to outlaw racial discrimination that will be enacted owes much to American experience of the value of entrenching human rights. Above all, the deliberate democratisation of British life which is to be undertaken can be seen as the direct re-import of the spirit of the 1776 revolution. This island as a toy soldier tourist paradise, with its

quaint old ways, has never really impressed any but the tiny and unrepresentative anglophile fringe in the most vigorous country in the world. Nye Bevan's health service, by contrast, is still keenly studied by millions of Americans, who would like to see its best features copied there.

A Labour Britain that is economically stronger, tougher, more egalitarian and more independent will be far more in tune with what is best in democratic America than is the flabby demoralised society over which Sir Alexander Douglas-Home presides so aristocratically, and promises so unconvincingly to modernise.

A NEW EUROPE

June 12, 1964

JOHN FOSTER DULLES once talked about an agonising reappraisal of policy. All reappraisals are agonising. They involve going back to the facts and seeing what they tell you regardless of the prejudices and preferences that have previously shaped your thinking. Yet without regular reappraisals we drift further and further from reality. There is, right now, an urgent need for a new look at our relations with Europe.

Since the cold war began, British policy towards the Continent has been based upon four principal assumptions :

1. There was an implacable hostility between the USSR and Western Europe, and a real risk of a Soviet military invasion.
2. All the régimes in Eastern Europe were satellite States sustained by Russian troops, taking orders from Moscow and hence not worth bothering about individually.
3. There was a permanent and unbridgeable ideological gulf between Communists and all non-Communists.
4. The only answer to this challenge lay in Western solidarity under American military and political leadership, later supplemented by a new infrastructure of the Six which would permit Western Europe to rise into more nearly equal partnership with the US.

From these assumptions all British policy towards Europe flows. They explain among other things the creation of NATO, the rearmament of Germany, the icy indifference to Eastern Europe, support for Franco's Spain, Britain's application to

join the Common Market, and the anxious reassertion of the special relationship with Washington.

Every one of the old assumptions has changed to a greater or less degree, and whatever the merits of the policies they produced in the late forties and early fifties, they are now out of date. Britain is excluded from Western Europe by France and from influence in Eastern Europe by its own inactivity. Polycentrism has eroded the solidity of both the Warsaw pact and NATO. What is needed is a basic reassessment of the new realities.

Khrushchev's Russia and Johnson's America are feeling their way, however slowly, to a mutual recognition of a common interest, and tension between them has begun to diminish. The Governments of Eastern Europe have not only de-Stalinised themselves but are developing policies that are independent, without being anti-Soviet, and may have won greater popular support among their own people than we might like to admit.

Even on the ideological front the situation is changing rapidly. One consequence of the Sino-Soviet dispute is the emergence of a split in the Communist parties of Europe. Faced with bitter criticism from the "Chinese" Left, the "Russian" Communists, everywhere are finding themselves forced into a more central position. Higher living standards and greater freedom of artistic, literary and political criticism, have brought real relaxation and will make co-operation with the democratic Socialists of Western Europe (who are also realigning themselves and discovering a new Socialist radicalism) much easier in the long run. Developments in France and Italy may point towards an eventual popular front once the Communist parties have broken their links with the Chinese faction.

Nor are all the interesting changes in Europe confined to the East. The relative reduction and contraction of American

power and the reassertion of French influence have profoundly changed the Western alliance. Whatever one may think of de Gaulle's authoritarian domestic tendencies and his inflated identification of his own personality with that of a renascent France, French diplomacy is felt everywhere in the world. Painful as it is for us to admit it, France is today infinitely more influential in the world than we are. Britain seems to stand for nothing clear and plain. It is halting in its relations with Russia, ambiguous to China, neutralist in Africa, negativist at the United Nations and bereft of any policy for Europe. All the opportunities created by the new Europe are being missed.

It is not so hard to see the outlines of a policy that would make sense in Europe. As the longer range missiles come into operation, the need for forward nuclear bases diminishes, and technological disengagement coupled with an agreement against the spread of nuclear weapons opens up a real opportunity for the discovery of a common interest between Eastern and Western Europe. An Anglo-Polish initiative to summon a pan-European conference to discuss European affairs would be well worth serious consideration. It would be welcomed by the Scandinavians, pleasing to the East Europeans, and reassuring to those in Western Europe who would like to see Russian military influence diminishing. Moreover, it would be a real Europe and not the narrow, affluent, technocratic Europe of the Six.

Throughout the long negotiations for Britain's entry to the Common Market I never felt a European of the kind that Lord Gladwyn and his cohorts were trumpeting about on every Establishment platform and in the intellectual magazines. Of course the idea of a Franco-German rapprochement was worthwhile, and even moving. Of course the notion of national economic autarky was out of date. But the rapprochement that I wanted to see would have had to include recon-

ciliation between East and West Europe; the Anglo-Americans and the Russians. And the economic co-operation would have had to extend from the Atlantic to the Urals.

A few years ago this dream of a real Europe coming together through the convergence of a progressively de-Stalinised communism, meeting and mixing with a revitalised democratic socialism, may have been wholly unreal. Today it is not. And it makes a lot more sense than the blank defeatist despair that obscures the present Government's vision as it gazes coldly across the English Channel.

SOUTH AFRICA

April 17, 1964

OF ALL THE weaknesses that beset those in authority, blindness to reality is always the most crippling and usually the most inexcusable. Historians are merciless with "blind" politicians—the men who base their decisions on a grave misreading of the times in which they live and who never see the great issues which are being fought out right under their noses. Historians are helped by hindsight and hindsight is easier than foresight. So much so, that some statesmen are too busy studying the lessons of the past to read the writing on the wall.

But foresight is not as difficult as it seems. The exact pattern of future events may be unpredictable, but the factors which will interact to produce these events are almost always clearly visible in the contemporary scene. Anyone who now seriously attempts to forecast world developments over the next decade can easily find all the evidence on which to base a sound estimate. And of all the developments looming up at us from the mists ahead, the outline of the coming crisis in South Africa is already the most clearly discernible.

The South African crisis has got everything. There is no great issue that is not reflected in it. It may be seen as the last stand of colonialism in the African continent. It may be seen as the nation which has most firmly entrenched human inequality and indignity into its Constitution. It may be described as the most systematic police State in the world. It may be analysed as revealing the most acute class struggle since Karl

Marx wrote "Das Kapital". It may be studied as the focus of racial discrimination.

Any single one of these characteristics is full of revolutionary potential. Taken together they represent an explosive force of multimegaton proportions capable of being triggered off by another Sharpeville or one more death sentence on a Mandela or a Sisulu. And when it starts the whole continent will be drawn in. Like Lincoln's America, Africa "cannot endure permanently half slave and half free". The blood that was shed in defence of that proposition a century ago will run as freely in Africa before the sixties are out. Nor can we hope to confine the struggle to Africa alone. The world will polarise into two camps and the political fallout will drift across the oceans to poison the atmosphere wherever mixed communities are struggling to live together—even in Smethwick and Notting Hill.

What greater folly can be imagined in this situation than to fail to see it, or to see it and try not to notice it? Yet that is what this present Government is doing, voting against apartheid at the UN and simultaneously supplying arms that will maintain it in force. It is just this sort of hypocrisy that reduces Britain's influence in the world. At least those who openly support Verwoerd on the basis of "kith and kin" are honest. At least City financiers who draw an income from the diamond mines of Kimberley do not speak at Conservative rallies about liberty.

But Britain cannot stand aside or live for ever off the profits of apartheid. It is wrong and it won't work. There is no conflict here between lofty idealism and hard-headed realism. Both demand the abandonment of the shoddy acts of State that pass for a policy, and a firm national commitment to support action against the tyranny of the South African régime.

If the international law that we sought to establish at San Francisco means anything, action must be taken. This has to be said plainly if we are to understand the case for

international sanctions that has been so earnestly discussed by such a distinguished international conference in London this week. It is no good dismissing its work by saying that "sanctions are an act of war" as if that settled the argument. Sanctions may help us to avert war. But they are an act of force that amounts to a declaration of war and that is why they are right. Of course Britain cannot act alone. Nobody is suggesting that she should. In fact Britain is now acting almost alone—but on the wrong side.

It should be our job to join now with other countries to plan international action soon enough to avert the inevitable uprising. In fact, this week's conference on sanctions should be elevated to a governmental level. The earliest opportunity may come when the International Court of Justice reaches its judicial decision on the status of South-West Africa. This judgment should be enforced by an ultimatum to Pretoria backed by the threat of a total economic blockade. We must all hope that this ultimatum will be effective without the use of military force. If it is not, a UN combined operation may have to be mounted for a landing in Walvis Bay and a march on Windhoek. And, when that has been completed, a second ultimatum may well be necessary demanding the abandonment of apartheid throughout the Union and the adoption of a new Constitution.

If this is what we mean to do, the sooner the South African Government can be made to realise it the better. There will certainly be no progress until it understands that we mean business. And if we are to bring ourselves to mean business we have got to face the fact that stern action is the only alternative to disaster. If we do not see it in time, the historians will see it and wonder why we did not.

RACE AS A WORLD ISSUE

November 22, 1963

RACE IS FAST becoming the key issue in world politics today. The evidence is all there. In South Africa, systematic white oppression has already made an explosion inevitable and doomed Verwoerd to disaster. Across the Atlantic, the Negro campaign for equal rights, sometimes opposed by mob violence, has become the biggest single issue in American politics and could even topple President Kennedy next year.

As the gap between rich white and poor non-white nations widens the conflict has taken on an extra economic significance as well. Even the gigantic Sino-Soviet ideological dispute about co-existence and world revolution has already acquired racial overtones that cannot be ignored.

Anyone in Britain who imagines that we can stand aside from this great issue is living in a fool's paradise. George Brown said in Stockport last Sunday: "For years we have ducked the racial conflict and abdicated our responsibilities." He is absolutely right.

Sir Alec Douglas-Home and his colleagues bear a heavy responsibility. Their public speeches are full of fine phrases about the "multi-racial Commonwealth", "the wind of change" and "the free world". But in practice they sell arms to South Africa and Portugal and oppose all the constructive efforts made by the United Nations to work for human rights, as with their recent veto in the Security Council. At home they have imposed a discriminatory Commonwealth Immigration Act, refused to outlaw the colour bar and have done

practically nothing to help the immigrants who have already arrived.

Sir Alec is always denouncing neutralism. But the kindest thing you can say about his attitude to racial equality is that he is a neutralist. Quite aside from the hypocrisy of this policy it just won't work. Britain has become involved—but on the wrong side. We have become isolated from all the new forces in the world which are struggling for freedom and development, and in our isolation our influence for good has been immeasurably reduced.

The time has come for the formulation of a definite national policy towards the racial issue that can guide us for the future. It must include firm support for UN action against colonialism and racial repression. It must include Commonwealth consultation to meet the real problems of migration so that any necessary controls are on a non-racial basis. It must include firm legislation to outlaw racial discrimination in Britain itself. It must include positive Government and local government action to deal with the very serious problems of housing and employment that always arise whenever large groups of newcomers arrive in established communities.

All these separate policies must be seen as part of the whole picture and at last there are signs that they are being linked together in a general campaign for political action to implement them. On Sunday in St Pancras Town Hall each aspect will be dealt with by a distinguished platform of speakers at the meeting organised by the Movement for Colonial Freedom.

But more important even than policy is our attitude to race. If we steel ourselves to yield equality reluctantly and grudgingly we shall miss the whole significance and excitement of what is happening in the world. In the long run nothing but good can come out of the mixture of ideologies and cultures that is now in progress.

Fenner Brockway in his new book *African Socialism* (Bod-

ley Head, 12s 6d) describes the emergence of a whole political philosophy nurtured in the family and tribal traditions of that continent that has much to offer the world. It is a story full of hope and no one has done more to influence it than Fenner Brockway himself.

Here in Britain life will be enormously enriched by the immigrants who have come with their music and their gaiety. Those who dream of racial purity should reflect on the biological consequences and infinite boredom of incest and compare it with the vigour of America's "melting pot" and Israel's "pressure cooker" where the mixture of peoples is the secret of their dynamism.

NEHRU

May 29, 1964

WHY HAVE ALL the tributes that have been paid by the mighty to the memory of Jawaharlal Nehru been so inadequate? No man did more to earn the classic funeral oratory that his death has occasioned. But it was not the mighty for whom Nehru stood throughout his life, and they cannot now articulate the acute sense of loss felt by millions of little people in every continent for whom the hardest thing to bear is the knowledge that his voice has been stilled.

Above all Nehru was a man who understood his fellow creatures : knew our anxieties, weaknesses and aspirations, and when he spoke he spoke for us all. Even when he and Gandhi were voicing the national demand of the Indians for independence they were also speaking to, and for, a large audience in Britain. They really believed in, found and used the best that was in us as an instrument to get the best for their own people. That is the secret of the miraculous combination of victory and reconciliation that they achieved. It had nothing to do with the ingenious formula that substituted the phrase "Head of the Commonwealth" for "Empress of India" as a subsidiary title belonging to a British monarch.

It is sometimes said that Britain liberated India. In fact the very reverse is the truth. Gandhi and Nehru liberated us. By winning their freedom, they freed us from the ignorance and prejudice that lay behind the myth of Britain's imperial destiny. When we now meditate on the quality of Nehru's own leadership, it is embarrassing to remember that as recently as

20 years ago the Establishment in Britain should have deceived themselves into believing that India needed the British Raj.

In his long campaign to weld the new India into a modern developing democracy Nehru fulfilled his rôle as spokesman in a new way. He knew that religious, sectional, caste and class feelings lie close beneath the surface in every human mind. He also knew that the battle against them could not be fought out between men—because that only makes it worse—but must be fought out within each individual man. The secret of his leadership lay in building on those creative qualities and cohesive instincts which he believed lay within the heart of each person to whom he spoke. No wonder that those who heard him addressing half a million people felt that he was talking to them individually.

It was also Nehru's voice that won him world leadership. At the United Nations he spoke not only for his own countrymen but for the dispossessed everywhere. In championing non-alignment he tried to remind the rich nations that they could not afford to see each other as enemies while mankind's oldest enemies—poverty, disease and squalor—were still at large. He also spoke for the politically disfranchised minority in East and West who rejected the whole hysterical oversimplification on which Cold War policies were built. At a huge gathering which he addressed, on one of his visits to London during those years, Nehru talked about the need for "the temper of peace" in international relations, and directly challenged the whole conception of a Holy Crusade which we were all being bullied and bludgeoned and brainwashed into believing. His audience, both Indian and British, thanked God that at least he was there to say it for us.

The influence of Nehru's leadership is to be found today in every continent. By dividing force from violence he evolved a powerful guide to political action. The application of force to

achieve justice was often necessary. But if it was to be creative, especially after it had succeeded, it had to be led by men who had eradicated hatred from their own minds and were determined to minimise violence in the methods they used. Albert Luthuli in South Africa, Kenneth Kaunda in Zambia, and Martin Luther King in America are all examples of men deeply influenced by the ideas that Gandhi evolved and Nehru expressed.

By assuming the leadership of hundreds of millions of people who never had a chance to vote for him, Nehru the spokesman gave a new meaning to world democracy. For us he was as truly a personal representative as if we had elected him ourselves to the House of Commons, the Senate or the Supreme Soviet.

As we think of his life's work with gratitude we can also count ourselves lucky that we live at a time when new communications permitted him to shape our thinking and, when that shaping was done, to speak for us. If the little people seem so speechless at this moment it is because they know that they have lost their voice.

PART III

PEOPLE AND GOVERNMENT

WESTMINSTER WORKSHOP

May 8, 1964

ALL THREE POLITICAL parties in Britain today are officially pledged to the modernisation of Britain. However one may assess their relative sincerity, qualifications, methods or prospects of success, there is no doubt that this new theme accurately reflects the public mood. More and more people are convinced that we need a period of vigorous leadership and are preparing themselves for the changes that must come.

If their hopes are to be realised the main impulse must start in the workshop at Westminster where the new MPs will be gathering in October. The prospect of a Gothic annexe to be built beside Big Ben to provide new accommodation has focused public attention on the future of Parliament at exactly the right moment.

The fact that neither the Conservative Party nor the Labour Party has a clear policy for Parliament is the greatest single omission in the programmes being presented to the electorate. It is being invited to entrust the modernisation of Britain to an institution that contains within itself all the very faults that have to be eradicated from our society. Parliament today is a creaking, amateurish, nineteenth-century machine, encrusted with obsolete privileges, wedded to old procedures and hideously ill-equipped for the dynamic task which it must now assume.

The problem has, first, to be disentangled from the immediate political situation which reveals a malaise of a different

sort. At this moment a dying Parliament is performing the last rites over a dying Government, with no legislation of any importance for it to debate.

All that will change after the election. A new Prime Minister, refreshed by a mandate, will certainly come back to the Commons with a huge legislative programme. Present members who return revitalised by their fresh triumphs (or relieved by their survival) will be joined by new and younger MPs full of energy and high hopes. The queues for gallery tickets will lengthen outside St Stephen's Entrance and Hansard will have to increase its print order. Political interest will once again be high.

But that alone will not solve the fundamental difficulties and is more likely to accentuate them. The frustration of the newcomers when they discover what sort of a place they have come to is likely to be expressed impatiently and to awaken dissatisfaction among some old boys who have reluctantly accepted the *status quo* philosophically. A big pressure for drastic change is sure to start in the new Parliament. And about time, too.

To succeed, reform must be directed towards the clear objective of allowing Parliament to do its job properly. The Commons must be strengthened without weakening the Government, and the extent to which that can be done will determine the extent of reform that is possible.

i. First and foremost, MPs must be equipped to do what they have been elected to do. This means providing them collectively with amenities, facilities and research assistance to enable them to handle their routine work efficiently and pursue their special interests thoroughly. It is fantastic even to have to ask that each MP should have a separate office with a telephone, a desk, a chair, and a filing cabinet. But we have so long accepted the squalor in which we work that even minimum requirements are nowhere near satisfied, and they never will be until the Lord Great Chamberlain who

controls the Palace has been replaced by a House Committee.

2. The expenses of the job must be met on a proper basis too. Whether, with about 5,000 letters a year coming in, I am above or below the average I do not know, but the cost of handling public and political correspondence ought to be a legitimate charge on public funds, as it is for a civil servant. The salaries must be greatly increased and linked to a Civil Service grade. Half-pay pensions as of right should be paid to retired members of long service.

3. Next, Parliament must reassert itself as the principal guardian of the liberties and rights of the individual. The case for an Ombudsman, able to inquire into complaints as a servant of the House of Commons and to publish his findings, is overwhelming. Similarly, the House should be far readier to establish committees of inquiry to examine matters where there is cause for disquiet, along the lines of the Public Accounts Committee.

4. The Commons should also make more of its rôle as the grand forum of the nation. This is at the heart of the case for the broadcasting of parliamentary debates and the new generation of MPs is unlikely to be much influenced by the cautious conservatism that now prevents even an experiment in this direction.

5. Finally, it should be the rôle of the Commons to look ahead in general debates at the problems that are coming up and begin to develop lines of policy to meet them. If Select Committees were appointed instead of Royal Commissions to hear the experts and sift the evidence, all their recommendations would start with the advantage of having informed advocates, inside Parliament, continually pressing for their adoption, instead of gathering dust in pigeon-holes in Whitehall.

These and a number of urgent procedural, administrative and technical changes add up to a policy for Parliament which is of sufficient importance to be presented to the voters in an

election manifesto. The job of carrying them through will fall to the Leader of the House of Commons in the new Government. His opportunities for reform may prove to be the most important and rewarding of all, for he will be rebuilding the workshop in which all future political progress will be fashioned.

TELEVISING THE COMMONS

November 15, 1963

THE BANNING OF "That Was The Week That Was" shows up the BBC at its worst. Here is a programme that has declared war on humbug and waged it so effectively that millions upon millions of people stay up late on Saturday night to cheer it on. And now the top brass at Broadcasting House (presumably under heavy Conservative pressure) have got cold feet and are taking it off the air.

No other political programmes are to be banned because it is election year. "Panorama" and "Gallery" will go on as before, ever obsequious to the Establishment, dealing with the Prime Minister as though he really were the Queen's own choice and the Queen's Speech as though she really had written it herself. Meanwhile, Harold Wilson will presumably still be hectored and interrupted by their interviewers as though he were in an entirely different category.

The time has now come to launch a campaign to televise the House of Commons. For how much longer are we going to put up with getting our parliamentary reporting by courtesy of the popular press and the self-appointed TV commentators? Why can't the cameras come to Westminster and show us as we are? This session is the most important for a dozen years. The debates we shall have will range over every political issue in the nation—housing and transport, schools and science, defence and pensions.

All this is being reported in the press and on TV in terms of a duel between two party leaders. The personality cult has finally infected the Lobby correspondents. They are projecting

the House of Commons as if it were a heavyweight championship at the White City. Issues are subordinated to colourful pen sketches of the main contenders. The gossip columnists seem to have taken over the Press Gallery.

This way lies the death of Parliament. The House of Commons is the grand forum of the nation or nothing at all. Here, Government policies must be deployed and criticised : here, the Opposition must reveal and defend its alternative in broad outline : here, those who exercise power must be held accountable for the use they make of it to backbenchers of all parties : here, the qualities of men and women are continuously assessed by colleagues who know them intimately and who see how they react to stress and defeat as well as how they take their moments of glory.

The MPs who carry weight and are respected for their knowledge and integrity are not by any means always the same ones as those who shine in the contrived four-minute knock-about, beloved by the TV producers.

If the House of Commons let in the cameras, people would see us, warts and all. They might not like us all the time, but parliamentary debate is a substitute for civil war and they would more likely share our moments of passion than mock us for showing them. At any rate, they would be judging us by what we are and not what others, for their own purposes, want to make us out to be.

Why, then, is the Commons not televised? Because many members—and this is more a matter of age than political affiliation—fear some loss of dignity and intimacy, and visualise nightmarish arc lights and even make-up and the heady atmosphere of party conferences. In truth the cameras would soon be forgotten once they were installed. Few younger MPs on all sides are impressed by these objections and for them the TV lens holds out no more horror—or promise—than the sight of a journalist, pencil in hand, at a political meeting.

Televising Parliament will, of course, come in time. The question really is, why not now, when it could do some real good? If there is to be a breakthrough it has got to be made an issue and not discussed interminably.

From whom should the initiative come? Those in the Commons who want it must start pushing now. The broadcasting authorities should urge it as strongly as the press would be urging its right to attend, if they were still kept out. Parliamentary reluctance may be understandable, but what is incomprehensible is the absence of any pressure by radio and TV to get in. It would be easy for them to take the first jump and force Parliament to consider it and give an answer.

Why does the BBC not offer to record, in sound only, a day's debate taken straight off the existing Commons microphone control panel and hand the tape over into Mr Speaker's keeping, to be played back in a Committee Room so MPs could start by hearing what it sounds like? It could be done tomorrow at the cost of a few pounds for an engineer's salary and a dozen reels of tape.

Why does ITV not make a studio mock-up of the Commons chamber and—using Hansard for a script—re-enact part of a day's proceedings and broadcast it to show what the real thing might be like?

These are practical first steps that would start a public debate and create sufficient pressure to get a Select Committee set up to discuss the implications of a change. And when it comes, like every sensible reform, within six months you won't be able to find anyone who does not claim to have been in favour of it all along.

EXIT THE LORDS

November 8, 1963

WHEN PARLIAMENT MEETS on Tuesday all attention will be focused on the House of Commons, where the major battles of the new session will be fought out. The House of Lords, by contrast, will sink back into the twilight zone of politics.

This is the real significance of the Peerage Act. The fact that it permitted a peer to become Prime Minister and, helped by the crude use of patronage, has allowed for Lord Hailsham's return as well, must not obscure its importance in downgrading the Lords and strengthening the Commons. The sight of two men who dearly loved their titles being forced to shed them and seek election as commoners by commoners, in order to qualify themselves to exercise political power, should be a tonic for democrats.

Nor is this all. The authority of the Lords will drain away more rapidly after next July when the time limit for renunciation expires for sitting peers. Those who stay on will then have opted for privilege, and the House will have become a voluntary body entirely made up of those who want to be there. The Peerage Act has thus knocked away the last pretence that hereditary service is an imposed public duty manfully discharged, an argument that has often been heard, amid nods of general self-approval, whenever peers wanted to justify their existence. No such argument can ever be used again.

But can matters stand as they are? If we could look forward to the steady transformation of the Upper House from an effective into a decorative element in our Constitution there

might be a case for letting nature take its course. Unfortunately, that is not the whole story. The Conservative Party retains an overwhelming majority in the House of Lords and if defeated in the next election it is certain to make the maximum use of these reserve battalions, discreetly at first and later to much more effect. How large that majority is we shall never know. The Chief Government Whip there, in answer to my request for the names and number of peers who accepted his whip, replied that this was "confidential". The House of Lords must be the only legislative assembly in the world whose members feel entitled to keep their party allegiance secret. The truth would be too embarrassing.

The powers of the Lords, which a Conservative Opposition could use, include an unrestricted veto over statutory instruments (which are often of crucial importance) and the six-month delay they can impose on legislation which becomes an absolute veto in the year immediately preceding a general election. Thus Harold Wilson can only count on four years' freedom of legislative action instead of the five enjoyed by Conservative Prime Ministers. This is serious enough, but in addition an extra year in office may make all the difference between re-election and defeat as this Government knows better than most. In any case, the right to run a full term ought not to be limited to parties that command a majority in the Lords.

For this reason alone, it is essential that immediately after the next general election the Labour Government should introduce legislation to confer final power on the Commons that will allow it to override any obstruction from the Lords without a delaying period. The case for this is constitutionally unanswerable and is better argued on the principles involved than left until its merits become confused with the merits of a bill actually being obstructed.

Should Labour tackle composition at the same time as it tackles powers? Some useful changes could be made without

elaborate legislation, for example by a declaration from No 10 Downing Street that no more hereditary peers were to be created at all, backed up if necessary by a humble address from the Commons to the Crown. This would also be a significant public mood-changer, symbolically ushering in an age of reform.

But how much better to do the job properly and eliminate the hereditary peers altogether, except on ceremonial occasions. This would still leave a large nucleus of first creations and life peers who could be strengthened by fresh appointments. It wouldn't even be necessary to make your recruits life peers. A simple amendment to the Standing Orders of the House of Lords would allow commoners to receive Writs of Attendance, which confer no nobility, but would permit the recipient to take part in the debates.

Perhaps the most decisive argument that can be used in favour of settling things once and for all is the psychological one. Britain today is choked with pomp, strangled by privilege and weakened by nostalgia for the past. The continuation of an hereditary-peers-with-power symbolises and sustains this unhealthy situation. It deadens innovation and crushes individual enterprise far more effectively than the supposed bureaucracy of the Welfare State. And, more specifically, it is a massive irrelevance, keeping out of an advisory second chamber many brilliant, creative, and experienced people who, though not wishing to stand for the Commons, must somehow be harnessed to the task of national regeneration.

THE FOUNT OF HONOUR

January 3, 1964

YESTERDAY JOHN GRIGG attacked the Honours List because it is "used as a cheap device for rewarding faithful party workers". This is certainly how it has been used traditionally by the Conservatives. In the first six and a half years of the present administration Tory MPs, past and present, received 27 peerages, 30 baronetcies and 48 knighthoods, a total of 105 in all.

Thus, within that period nearly one in three of them had been elevated—and they were only a tiny fraction of the hundreds of party chairmen and agents up and down the country who had been rewarded for what are politely known as "political and public services".

Financial corruption in the award of Honours has been eliminated. But the corruption of the patronage system has not. By controlling the valve on the Fount of Honour, Macmillan was able on retirement, to spray his personal staff with a peerage and several knighthoods, and Home was able to elevate Wakefield to make room for Hogg. If that were all that were wrong with the Honours List it would be fairly easy to put right, but unfortunately it isn't.

The whole system of honours and awards in Britain today is out of date. Hereditary peerages—like the one given to Mr Roy Thomson—are, in law, "incorporeal hereditaments, fix't in the blood and annexed to the posterity", which confer on him and his male heirs, in perpetuity, the right to a seat in Parliament. Baronetcies—like the one given to Mr Arbuthnot,

Tory MP since 1950—were invented by James I in 1611 and sold for £1,095 each to raise money for his army in Ulster. Baronets are still so insecure socially that in 1898 they founded their own trade union, the "Honourable Society of the Baronetage", to maintain their privileges.

Most of the orders of chivalry are phoney Victorian or Edwardian imitations of medieval customs and are divided into five or more grades, so that together there are about 50 different categories of awards that can be made. For the new knights, the College of Heralds are waiting to oblige, for a fee, with coats of arms. Blackstone, the distinguished eighteenth-century constitutional lawyer, summed them up very aptly 200 years ago when he wrote: "The marshalling of coat armour has fallen into the hands of certain officers called Heralds, who have allowed for lucre such falsity and confusion to creep into their records that even their common seal can no longer be received as evidence in any Court of Justice."

Honours are, of course, given not on the basis of what a person has done, but on the basis of his status in society at the time that he did it. Thus the Duke of Kent was made a Knight Grand Cross of the Royal Victorian Order for public service of a minor kind, while the latest Honours List included the award of a BEM for Mr W. G. Purchase, a sub-postmaster who has been injured on four separate occasions while fighting off bandits.

A senior officer at the College of Heralds to whom I once spoke about the Duke of Kent's award replied with pleasant frankness: "If you live near the Fount of Honour you must expect to be doused," implying that if you don't you mustn't be surprised if very little comes your way. Similarly, yachting, cricket and horse-racing are gentlemanly sports while snooker, soccer and greyhound racing are not.

The Honours System, as it now exists, serves to buttress the class structure in Britain, dividing people into social categories on the basis that there are superior and inferior human beings.

Even decorations for gallantry are awarded according to rank. Army officers get the Military Cross but for the same act of courage NCOs and privates get the Military Medal, and it's the same in the other Services as well. Only the VC and the GC are given for guts regardless of whether you're a field-marshall or a private.

Every society includes people who think they are better than others, but the terrifying characteristic of British society is that many of those who are supposed to be inferior have been brain-washed into believing that they actually are. So the class structure rests not on the pretensions of the élite but on the acceptance of these pretensions by the mass of the people.

The system is so fundamentally rotten that you can't improve it by altering the allocation of existing Honours. It would be ludicrous to make a gallant sub-postmistress a Dame Grand Cross of the Order of St Michael and St George (which on merit she deserves), and it would be considered a deliberate insult to offer a BEM to a retiring Admiral of the Fleet after an undistinguished naval career (which would be all that he deserved). Any attempt to democratise the honours system would only reveal even more devastatingly the class basis on which it rests.

The simplest thing to do would be to discontinue the hereditary and phoney parts of it altogether by not recommending anyone for peerages, baronetcies or the Orders of Chivalry, leaving the Crown to dispense only the OM, the CH and a simplified system of decorations for gallantry that took no account of rank.

Then you could start again and search for a simple and dignified way by which the community could recognise service and reward merit. An annual Resolution of Thanks, passed by the House of Commons and followed by the presentation of a Parliamentary Medal to those named by Mr Speaker at a gala

reception in Westminster Hall, would be infinitely preferable and far more in tune with the spirit of the age.

For what could be more undignified than the sight of whole-page colour ads week after week in glossy American magazines depicting us as a people ennobled, bedecked, beribboned and bemedalled, advertising whisky and tweeds and the delights of a holiday in quaint old Britain. That part of our declining prestige in the world it is in our power to correct.

THE CROWN

July 10, 1964

WE ARE so busy thinking of things that the Commonwealth can learn from Britain that we sometimes forget how much Britain can learn from the Commonwealth. One of the most interesting developments in recent years has been the growth of republican forms of government inside Commonwealth countries that have retained the Crown as a symbolic link. When India became a republic, some said it would sever her association with Britain; in fact it had the very opposite effect. The continuation of a Kingdom of India would have been unthinkable. The Crown would have become deeply involved in Indian politics and soon replaced. Its survival as a symbol has only been made possible by its complete and total political sterilisation.

In Britain, the Crown still plays a far more important part. Though a constitutional monarchy exercises most of its powers on the mandatory advice of elected Ministers, it still has considerable influence and is actually far more controversial than is publicly admitted. In recent years thoughtful criticism of this influence has been on the increase. This criticism is quite distinct from the constant sniping at the Royal Family—a very unattractive feature of the press, but one which is also on the increase. It is a reflection, perhaps, of the gentleman's embargo that has always been placed upon discussion of Monarchy at a serious level.

Few can expect the Monarchy to operate in exactly the same way in the future as it has in the past, and undoubtedly republican sentiments are more widely held today than for

quite a long time; yet all but the most stringent rethinking falls short of advocating a complete republic or doing away with the Monarch altogether. For the experience of the Commonwealth republics shows there is another way. It is now possible to imagine a Britain that was republican in every meaningful sense, but still recognised the Crown as Head of State, in the same way as India recognises it as Head of the Commonwealth. It may well be that the survival of the Crown, as a symbol here, requires us to divorce it from all semblance of power in Britain too.

If this was to be decided on as a matter of public policy, what kind of changes would it involve? First, an examination of those royal prerogatives which are theoretically still the preserve of the Monarch. The most obvious are the choice of Prime Minister and the dissolution of Parliament. In recent months, both these prerogatives have been crudely manipulated in the interests of certain sections of the Conservative Party. The appointment of Lord Home as Prime Minister was the result of a bitter power struggle inside the Conservative leadership. But afterwards he was packaged for presentation to the public as the unfettered choice of the Crown. Later, Home chose to tease the electorate about the date of the general election which, theoretically, is at the discretion of the Monarch. If we are ever to get away from the evils inherent in this vulgar use of the Sovereign for party political purposes, these two prerogatives have got to be transferred to somebody else. The obvious person is the Speaker of the House of Commons, who is infinitely better qualified to decide who should be asked to form a Government and when Parliament should be dissolved.

Another example of the political abuse of the Crown's powers is in the field of honours. Since 1951, 199 Government MPs have received peerages, baronetcies, knighthoods or other honours on the recommendation of successive Conservative

Prime Ministers. This massive dispensation of patronage undermines the independence of MPs and is used to maintain party discipline. MPs should be entirely ineligible for any sort of honour and those who receive them should vacate their seats in the same way—and for the same reason—that Government contractors are obliged to do so. Better still to follow the Canadian example and finish with the award of titles altogether.

It is also time that we re-examined the relationship between Church and State. The appointment of bishops and archbishops by the Prime Minister, and the authority of the House of Commons over Church theology, liturgy and discipline is totally indefensible. Quite aside from its enervating effect on the Church itself, the Establishment creates different classes of citizenship. An Anglican is a first-class citizen. A non-conformist or Catholic is a "second-class" citizen. Other religions are regarded as beyond the pale. If we are going to modernise our institutions, the case for denationalising the Church of England is unanswerable.

Once liberated from its remaining political and ecclesiastical functions, the Crown could continue as a symbol of our national identity in the same way as it is a symbol of the identity of the Commonwealth. It could then take its proper place as an honoured part of our rich heritage of folklore, to be enjoyed and appreciated on high days and holidays; a central piece of pageantry for a nation that likes its history to live—but has firmly resolved never to be enslaved by it.

THE PRESS AND POLITICS

July 24, 1964

ON FRIDAY PARLIAMENT adjourns for the last time. A few weeks later it will cease to exist. The voices in the Chamber will be stilled, the typewriters in the Hansard room will stop their clacking, the dust covers will go up in the Library and Smoking Room, leaving the Palace of Westminster to its ghosts and its memories. Power is passing back to those from whom it is derived, and as the electors make their final choice they must do it without the benefit of continuing Commons debates.

It is the regular confrontation of differing views that gives Parliament its special character and importance, and in the period of intense political campaigning that lies ahead it is this daily dialogue that will be missing. In its place will come parallel monologues by political parties, each bombarding the voters with speeches, leaflets, posters and pamphlets, designed to win the loyalty of those to whom they are addressed. This is right and proper. But it also places a tremendous responsibility upon the organs of mass communication—particularly the press and the broadcasting authorities—whose rôle is a far bigger one when Parliament has been dissolved.

How well are we served by the press? It is impossible for an active politician not to be a little schizophrenic on the subject. As a campaigner for a particular point of view he must naturally be tempted to see each newspaper as friend or foe and to judge it by that simple criterion. But as a citizen he knows that freedom and democracy depend upon the maintenance of a

vigorous, independent and relentless press. It is as a citizen, rather than as a party loyalist, that the defects of our press seem most obvious to me.

With certain honourable exceptions, most newspapers have completely succumbed to the personality cult in politics. Ever since Hollywood developed the film star, the tendency has been more and more to extend the idea of celebrities into politics too. No one should underestimate the importance of personality in a political leader: his character, ability, and background are of legitimate interest and of some relevance. But the whole business has got totally out of control and there is a serious danger of burying the real issues under mounds of personal trivia which envelop the principal figures on either side.

The next defect is the absence of hard news, succinctly reported. As editors progressively abdicate this function to radio and television, the papers are developing steadily into daily magazines full of opinion, interpretation and comment, but sadly short on news. For the student of affairs it is becoming increasing difficult to know what is going on in the world and hence to judge the quality of political leadership that is offered. This is especially true of international affairs and is made more dangerous by the introspective parochialism which has grown so alarmingly in post-imperial Britain. It is true also of scientific and technical news, depriving us of the vital new information which we must have if we are to adapt ourselves to the dangers—and possibilities—of the age in which we live. There are new weekly magazines to cater for this need, but no newspaper proprietor has yet seriously applied himself to the problem of making this information available to his own readers.

Political reporting also suffers from the operation of the lobby system. To say this is almost sacrilegious, for both lobby journalists and politicians are endlessly congratulating each other on the brilliant success of the unique nature of their relationship. It is not difficult to see why. Under this system,

Ministers and MPs can talk "on lobby terms" to journalists, confident that nothing they say will be attributed to them; and journalists can always find out what is really happening without bothering to dig on their own. In this way what amounts to a partnership in suppression has been established which greatly damages the public interest. It opens the way to news management by those who are in power and blunts the probing needle of press investigations—except for football scandals and crime rackets. One day some political correspondent is going to tumble to the fact that he would do far better to abandon the cosy comfort of "lobby terms" and set up the sort of private political intelligence unit that every newspaper should have. When the break comes every editor in London will have to fall into line.

But perhaps the greatest defect of the press is its failure to provide within its own pages the sort of confrontation of rival views that is necessary to allow the readers to make a wise choice. Fact and comment are now so hopelessly mixed that no one who relies on a popular newspaper—or even some serious ones—is ever brought up against the full weight of the argument advanced by the other side. "The enemy" are always made to look foolish and incompetent, which not all enemies always are. Spoon-fed judgments administered by partisan editors are no substitute for those reached after due consideration of differing opinions, each presented with force and conviction.

The press also fails us by its neglect, or poor presentation, of minority views. As its power becomes concentrated into fewer and fewer hands this danger becomes progressively greater, and when newspapers commanding the loyalty of well over a million readers still cannot survive the prospect is gloomier still. Thus the pattern of established views becomes firmer and firmer and the voices in the wilderness are utterly drowned by the printing presses roaring out their multi-million

copies each day. As a result the public are shut off from an essential part of the process of political renewal which every society needs if it is to avoid complete ossification.

Many of these defects in the British press are inevitable and ineradicable. Happily, radio and television with their more direct approach compensate us in part. At its best a broadcast brings you into direct contact with those who have something to say and the debates and arguments which take place on the air, though usually truncated, offer some stimulus to thought. But even they are poor substitutes for the directness that would come from the broadcasting of great debates at the United Nations, in Parliament and on local authorities. For so long as we continue to shut them out from our homes we shall continue to remain handicapped in the choice we make of those whom we send to represent us in the seats of power.

PART IV

THE INDEPENDENT MIND

FIRST THINGS FIRST

January 24, 1964

MOST MANIFESTOS ARE ephemeral things. The products of some passing crisis, they quickly lose their interest and, yellowing in a public library, await the attention of a distant historian. But some manifestos have more permanent value. They arise out of the hearts and consciences of men who have brooded long and silently over the development of events and finally can hold their peace no longer. When they speak, they speak with the force and power that comes from accumulated experience and deeply held convictions. Such a manifesto has just been given to me by a young graphics designer named Robert Chapman. This is what it says in full.

"We, the undersigned, are graphic designers, photographers and students who have been brought up in a world in which the techniques and apparatus of advertising have persistently been presented to us as the most lucrative, effective, and desirable means of using our talents. We have been bombarded with publications devoted to this belief, applauding the work of those who have flogged their skill and imagination to sell such things as :

"Cat food, stomach powders, detergent, hair restorer, striped toothpaste, aftershave lotion, before shave lotion, slimming diets, deodorants, fizzy water, cigarettes, roll-ons, pull-ons, and slip-ons.

"By far the greatest time and effort of those working in the advertising industry are wasted on these trivial purposes, which contribute little or nothing to our national prosperity.

"In common with an increasing number of the general public we have reached a saturation point at which the high-pitched scream of consumer selling is no more than sheer noise. We think that there are other things more worth using our skill and experience on. There are signs for streets and buildings, books and periodicals, catalogues, instructional manuals, industrial photography, educational films, television features, scientific and industrial publications and all the other media through which we promote our trade, our education, our culture and our greater awareness of the world.

"We do not advocate the abolition of high pressure consumer advertising : this is not feasible. Nor do we want to take any of the fun out of life. But we are proposing a reversal of priorities in favour of the more useful and more lasting forms of communication. We hope that our society will tire of gimmick merchants, status salesmen and hidden persuaders, and that the prior call on our skills will be for worth-while purposes. With this in mind, we propose to share our experience and opinions, and to make them available to colleagues, students, and others who may be interested."

It all began last month when Ken Garland, a former art editor of *Design* magazine, read out the first draft, at a crowded forum held at the Institute of Contemporary Arts. It was received with such enthusiasm that it was circulated and signed by a widely representative group of 22 young designers, photographers, artists and typographers. The youngest is barely out of his teens; the oldest, Edward Wright, now in his forties, is the head of the Graphics Department at the Chelsea School of Art.

The responsibility for the waste of talent which they have so vehemently denounced is one we must all share. The evidence for it is all around us in the ugliness with which we have to live. It could so easily be replaced if only we consciously decided as a community to engage some of the

skill which now goes into the frills of an affluent society.

The contrast is even more marked if you look at the physical amenities and facilities that are available for different purposes. Why is there money to pay for hostesses to launch great campaigns for trading stamps while we are still critically short of teachers and nurses? Why are there such gleaming air-conditioned bowling alleys and such miserable dungeon-like rest centres for the homeless? Sooner or later someone must point a finger of accusation at us and if the Bench of Bishops won't do it let us thank God for the creative young people who signed this manifesto.

We should be thankful too that we live in an age of mass communication when a small group with something definite and positive to say have a chance of reaching a wider audience with the message. Earlier civilisations could decline in relative peace and leave their faults uncorrected until they became uncorrectable. The voices of protest were not heard above the din of revelry and if they grew too strong they could always be silenced.

Our generation now enjoys the benefit of feedback—the scientist's term for the governor that regulates modern technical processes of production. In an automatic factory feedback will warn the main control panel if the raw material supply gets too low or one of the drills is worn out and needs replacing. Modern communications are our feedback system telling us that something is wrong when there is still time to put it right. "First Things First" is just such a warning light.

EDITORS v. PUBLISHERS

February 14, 1964

THE YEAR 1964 PROMISES to be a big year for mass communications. There are hopes of getting regular satellite TV relays from the Olympic Games in Tokyo. The BBC Second Channel is going on the air, and a new daily newspaper, the *Sun*, is due to start publication in the autumn. We shall have more to see and hear and read and for that we should be grateful. But what are we entitled to expect from these new developments?

Mass communication is without doubt the single most important feature of the modern world. It is the real infrastructure of our global society. It illuminates what used to be dark and it lubricates the processes of change. It feeds back information so that we can correct mistakes, and it strengthens the new-found common interest we have in survival and co-operation, cementing us together through a new realism. We must all be interested in how this power is exercised.

Once communication had developed beyond the point of personal conversation and individual letter-writing and began to depend upon mechanical processes, it inevitably fell into the hands of professional communicators: editors and publishers. The editor controls his newspaper, his magazine or his radio or TV programme. He has a framework full of slots that must be filled with news items, features and comment. When he goes to others he sees himself as a representative of his audience with a duty to question on their behalf and then to interpret the answers he gets. The publisher, on the other hand,

sees his rôle very differently. He tries to find someone with something to say and then provides him with the technical facilities for saying it: printing and binding and selling his books, or arranging to broadcast his opinions.

What is wrong with mass communication today is that there is far too much editing and far too little publishing. The packaged newspaper and TV programme may be brilliant examples of skilful editing but they deny to readers and viewers that most vivid experience of all: a real confrontation with the published ideas and opinions of people who have got something to say.

The battle between the editors and the publishers will have to be fought out all over again on BBC-2, in the offices of the *Sun* and among those who will ultimately provide us with worldwide TV coverage. Their job will certainly involve much editing but their success should be judged by the extent to which they can assume the much more vital rôle of publishers. They should set themselves to meet three urgent needs.

First, we want much more hard news. Without it the whole community will fall further and further behind events. Even those who try to keep up systematically with what is happening often feel as if they are running up a down escalator. It is a hopeless task. Especially we need more news about scientific and technical developments. The major ones will revolutionise our lives and it is as well that we should know about them. It will help correct the neglect of science in our education and bridge the gulf between ourselves and the scientists. It will also subtly change our social values by reporting us to ourselves more as producers than as consumers. The excitement of new productive processes is far greater than the dreary cult of personality in the gossip columns which seek to project us all as idle consumers of decaying pleasures.

Secondly, we want the BBC and the *Sun* and the international TV network to search out those people whose work and study qualifies them to speak with authority. How much

more valuable it would be if the BBC offered all its technical facilities to, say, the Road Research Laboratory to help them say what they want to say about road safety, instead of putting on a programme of their own about it and exercising their own inexpert editorial decisions even to the point of choosing what questions to put to experts who might really want to say something quite different.

Thirdly, we want the whole conception of international coverage to be revolutionised. If there is a crisis in Cyprus, we must know what the main protagonists on either side think about it themselves. I don't want the Greek or Turkish views explained to me. I want both Greeks and Turks to be helped to put the full strength of their whole case to us all, and to hear first-hand what Russia and America think about it, too. The "expert" diplomatic correspondent is at worst a biased propagandist and at best an irrelevance across a page of contemporary history. For years the BBC refused to transmit TV programmes made by the UN because they were not orientated for British viewers. Yet that is just why we ought to see them.

Martin Buber has said that the struggle for the control of communications is a struggle between education and propaganda. He is absolutely right. We can realise their full potential only if we are tough enough to permit them to confront us with the new knowledge of our generation and the strength of the arguments of all sides in controversy. If that is done our highest hopes for an educated world could be made a reality within the lifetime of us all.

EDUCATIONAL ESCALATION

February 29, 1964

ONE OF THE most encouraging things in Britain today is the fever of argument about education. Everybody is thinking about it and talking about it. Significantly, there is hardly anyone left who still believes the present system can be allowed to go on as it is. What is this argument really about?

First, it is about money. How much of our national resources should we allocate to education? Grim old school buildings have got to be replaced. Modern laboratories and equipment have got to be provided. There must be more teachers to reduce the size of classes and new universities must be established. To get these things people now seem ready to make sacrifices and accept the financial implications.

The second argument is about structure and curriculum. Here there is far less agreement except perhaps about the need for greater emphasis on science and technology. Beyond that the clash of opinions is becoming more intense. As more and more comprehensive schools come to maturity and develop their sixth forms, the defenders of selection at 11 are forced back on to the defensive. When the future of the independent public schools is seriously considered, as it will be within the next few years, the fight will become even more intense. Educational segregation will be as hard to eliminate from Britain as from the Deep South. The famous judgment of the American Supreme Court in 1954 applies with equal force here: "We conclude that in the field of public education the doctrine of 'separate but equal' has no place. Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal."

These controversies are now well understood. But there is another one which is only just beginning to emerge and it relates to the rôle of education in life. For this we have to thank the scientific revolution which has forced us to think of education as a process that must continue throughout the whole span of life. Education has at last been lifted from being the specialist concern of dons and teachers, and of parents with young children, to a level where it can demonstrably be seen to affect us all.

The old idea of education was that it was something you got at the beginning of life and that stayed with you all through. Even those who talked about equality of opportunity—and we have never been anywhere near it in Britain—thought of it in terms of equality of opportunity to get to a secondary school to which you were fitted by your ability. Once you were there you were like a rocket on a launching pad and by the time you left your guidance system had been set. You were fired on a predetermined course for a predetermined distance on to a predictable target. The most brilliant went the furthest and the rest fell short. There was no refuelling in flight. This once-for-all conception of education explains the intense agony and heart-searching of examinations. Both the 11-plus and the 18-plus (for university entrance) were last chances that could never return. Such a philosophy of education was always nonsense and never accorded with the facts.

It ignored the public schoolboy who drifted through school, had a good time at Oxbridge, went to seed as a company director, rotted his weekends away on the golf course, and very soon lost any intellectual curiosity he ever had and with it any claim to be described as an educated man. On the other hand, many men who only went to elementary school carried a passion for self-education through life, were voracious readers and developed first-class minds in the process. Undoubtedly some of the best educated MPs today are those who became so for and by themselves.

It also ignored the value of practical experience before a man has higher education. This was certainly proved by the post-war generation of ex-servicemen at university. They had been toughened by danger and matured by hardship. People laughed at them for being earnest and because they sat up all night talking over cocoa, but they were the best lot of undergraduates the dons ever had to teach.

Education must now be seen as a moving escalator available to us all through life. Up to 16 we shall all be on it. Those who are going straight through to university or to become doctors or scientists may stay on it as late as 24. But those who leave it to start work will get back on the escalator for months at a time if they are doing sandwich courses, or for a few hours at a time if they are on day-release or attending evening classes. Those who return to university after years in industry will go back on it full-time and others will rejoin it for retraining. Married women may get back on it after they have raised their families. And for everyone else there will be the University of the Air working in conjunction with correspondence courses. Television is one of the most wonderful instruments for education ever invented, and there must be many people who would be prepared to stay up late or get up early so that the greatest minds and the most brilliant teaching could reach them in their own homes.

The excitement of an educational system like this far exceeds the excitement of the material advances that science can bring. It is exciting not because of what it would do for us but because of what it will allow us to do for ourselves. Educational escalation will ultimately extend to everyone the chance to enjoy a full life hitherto regarded as the preserve of the privileged few.

SCHOOLS AND PEOPLE

July 17, 1964

If war is too important to be left to the generals, education is certainly too important to be left to the teachers—and for the same reason. You just can't succeed in either without a total effort. If the rising demand for more and better-equipped schools and more and better-paid teachers is to produce the revolution we need, there has got to be some tough, fundamental rethinking about the rôle of the school in the community, the relations between parents and teachers, and the whole purpose of education. We shall all be in for a major disappointment if we think that the remedy lies in a double dose of the mixture as before, and that the taxpayer and the Chancellor between them can do the job by agreeing to write out a bigger cheque.

The best statement I have ever read of what is involved came from Professor Parker Rossman, of Yale University. Speaking part as parent, and part as educationalist, his comments on American schools apply with equal force to us in Britain. He finds many of them to be conventional in outlook and offering an education that is deadening the minds and narrowing the spirits of the children who pass through them, pressurising them into conformity and isolating them from the excitement of the new age into which they will be projected.

He sees part of the answer in stimulating a far greater political interest in education so that candidates who run for office are forced to take account of the demand for improvements. He welcomes the work of parent teacher associations, with all their voluntary efforts to raise money for equipment,

musical instruments, books and scientific apparatus. But he deplores the fact that these activities fall so far short of recognising the parent as a partner in the school. He complains that too many teachers assume that parents cannot, and should not, be bothered with critical questions like what is taught and how, and are thus kept out of the most significant aspect of their children's education.

With the controversy now raging round the proposal for recruiting auxiliary teachers, it is interesting to read Professor Rossman's own recommendations that parents should be used as teachers' assistants in the schools which their own particular children attend. Quite apart from the possibility of lifting some of the routine work which now weighs so heavily on school staffs, he sees a positive advantage in the idea of bringing in the parents to help, quite as much for what it would do for them, as for what it would do for the schools. He draws a parallel between such a scheme and the accepted pattern in all primitive societies, where the child learns the values, skills and knowledge which he needs from those who are actually practising them in the village where he lives.

It is only in an age of extreme over-specialisation that we should be surprised by the idea that parents are, in fact, teachers and should be recognised as such. Part of what is wrong is that in nearly every country where standards of education have been raised, parents have surrendered their responsibilities to the schools and, having surrendered them, are often the most critical of the teachers who have taken over. Why should not a father who is a scientist be released part-time from his work to teach science in his children's school and then take the class to the laboratory where he works, so that he can show the application of scientific knowledge to practical work? To get such an idea accepted would involve exciting the enthusiasm and co-operation of employers,

parents and teachers and establishing relations between them that simply do not exist at present.

But Professor Rossman goes further even than this. His ideal is of a community school offering a far wider range of service to people of all ages who live in the area. He wants it to contain a library, shop, club rooms, sewing machines and other equipment for family learning and recreation. The children would use these facilities in the daytime. In the evening they would be available for everyone in the neighbourhood to go with or without their children. Local clubs and organisations would be centred on the school so that it would become the focal point for the education of young and old alike. If, as he argues, rapid social and technical change is opening up a gulf between the generations, the only real way to close it is for parents and children to go to school together. And if the depersonalisation of urban life is killing our sense of community then the school is the obvious place to revitalise it.

Community schools, once established, would take us half-way towards accepting education as a lifelong process and it would make it easier for us to identify the stages in life when we would naturally return to school. When the worker is thrown out of his job by new machines and automation he has got to be retrained and that is the natural moment when the Government should send him back to school. Or again, the young woman who is married and expecting a baby is much more likely to benefit by courses in homemaking and child-care than ever she was when she was a school-girl. And what about elderly people? Why shouldn't they regard the school as a place where they can sit and read in the library or acquire some new interest to enrich their retirement?

Professor Rossman argues that a society where everyone was related to a school would be a dynamic, growing, learning society. He sees new kinds of schools, from which no one ever

really graduated and he begins to define the good citizen as one who is willing to learn with his children and move with them into the new age. In short, he has stumbled on the most important discovery of all: people are people, and their various needs cannot be parcelled up neatly and sub-contracted out to specialists. Education is no exception.

HEROIC HERETICS

July 3, 1964

THE REVEREND WALTER GILL, expelled from the ministry by the Methodist Conference this week for refusing to give "the doctrinal assurance required annually of every Methodist minister", has now joined the small but immensely important group of heretics, dictionary definition: those who "choose" and "maintain opinions at variance with those generally received". Theologians may argue about the validity of the doctrine of the Virgin Birth which he is alleged to have denied. But what is important is not so much the correctness of his own belief, as his assertion of the right to preach the truth as he sees it, and his readiness to face the consequences of doing so. "I shall not change my views although I shall remain Methodist," he said. "I have not got a bean in the world. I live on my stipend, but I believe the Lord looks after his own."

Mr Gill also placed himself beside John Robinson, Bishop of Woolwich, whose book *Honest to God* created such a storm of controversy last year. For many people, including myself, Robinson's book burst through like a shaft of light, illuminating the relationship between man and his Creator, and man and man, in a way that none of the accepted mythology of the established Church has ever been able to do. But its real value, too, lay in its assertion of one man's right to think things out for himself and the courage that it gave others to do the same.

Those who prefer their religion packaged in supernatural mythology are quite entitled to have it that way. But there

are many for whom the ideas of a God-on-High, the Virgin Birth and Christ's physical Ascension are simply not helpful and actually act as a barrier to understanding. They make it harder to accept the validity of the teaching of Christ and set up a needless and irrelevant conflict with the scientific methods of analysis which are advancing on every other front. If the onrush of cynical and pagan apathy is ever to be halted, it must be by a force which stems from an understanding of the depths of man's nature. Edicts handed down from an ethereal Deity, who has supposedly vouchsafed the truth to a tiny group of bishops, just won't do.

As the movement for Christian unity develops, it will become increasingly important to preserve the right to non-conformity. Of course it is a wonderful thing that different denominations are learning to respect each other. The bitter conflict of the religious wars has long ago given way to co-existence. Now we are approaching the era of actual co-operation. Pope John's Ecumenical Council has opened up great new possibilities for better relations with other Churches. The talks between the Anglicans and the Methodists may prove equally fruitful. But before these moves towards reconciliation acquire a momentum that could lead to actual reunion, we ought to stop and think very carefully about the objectives which we have in mind.

It is one thing to seek organisational co-operation between denominations and individuals, each of whom retain the right to their own beliefs. It is quite another thing to seek to reimpose a doctrinal uniformity upon everyone. Such an attempt would certainly fail and, even if it succeeded momentarily, it would be followed by a new Reformation and a new division between those who are prepared to accept episcopal authority and those who will not submit their faith to the scrutiny, censorship and approval of a religious hierarchy.

There was never a time in history when the "chooser" (or

heretic) had a more important rôle to play. Conventional wisdom in religion (and political ideology too, for that matter) has a higher rate of obsolescence in a modern society than at any time in the past. Just as scientific archaeological discoveries enable us to understand and interpret the Scriptures more accurately and make a nonsense of fundamentalism, so the emergence of contemporary problems may invalidate the practical teaching of the Church on certain questions. Dr Jacob's conflict with the Chief Rabbi demonstrates the former, and Dr Anne Biezanek's courageous stand in favour of birth control demonstrates the latter. These are creative "heretics" who are choosing for themselves and challenging directly what they are told they must believe. For some people they are going too fast and for others their revolution may seem pitifully inadequate. But what is important is not whether their pace, or direction, is right but the simple fact of their self-questioning.

Those who, for honest reasons of personal belief, are prepared to stand by a principle have established something that is of far greater importance than the details of what they advocate. Events may often prove them to have been wrong. The borderline between a crank and a prophet is not always easy to draw. But, whatever the verdict of history may be, heretics must rank beside heroes as people who demonstrate in their lives the full, unquenchable and inexhaustible genius inherent in man's nature.

THE END OF THE GALLOWS

December 20, 1963

ON MONDAY AFTERNOON the centre of Bristol was ablaze with twinkling lights and full of shoppers carrying their parcels through the jostling crowds. Every shop-window was decorated, and inside the toy departments men dressed as Santa Claus sweated under their cottonwool beards as they dispensed goodwill to the children. The record departments echoed with "Top Twenty" discs which now include their seasonal quota of commercial sentiment about Mary and the Christ Child. Our affluent society was busy preparing to celebrate the festival of joy and peace.

But not everyone was shopping. Outside the red-brick walls of Horfield Prison there were three 12-year-old boys in blue duffel coats, who had come to watch something far more interesting than Christmas shopping—the preparations for an execution due to take place the next day. Why had they gone there? Why not, indeed? The hanging was the first one in Horfield Prison for ten years and it had had a lot of publicity in Bristol. For the boys this was not the flickering thrills of a TV lynching but the killing of a real man now sweating it out a few yards away behind the high walls and who would, in twenty-four hours' time, be buried in quick-lime, his death agony over. They scrutinised the faces of everyone who entered the gates. The Bishop had been to give Communion to the condemned man who had been baptised and confirmed since his sentence. But the boys were probably waiting to see if they could spot the hangman reporting for duty. Those who believe

in the deterrent value of hanging would surely have been impressed to notice how early in life it begins to exercise its awesome fascination.

Another group at the prison gates was led by a retired doctor with a white beard, his complexion made ruddy by the cold. He and his two companions were part of a long vigil which had been mounted throughout the weekend by the Bristol Campaign for the Abolishment of Capital Punishment. Leaning against the wall behind them was a simple banner inscribed with the words ALL LIFE IS WORTH SAVING. It was the only evidence that I could find in Bristol that day that the events in Bethlehem and the teachings of the Carpenter of Nazareth had made any impression at all upon our society.

Russell Pascoe is now dead. The crime for which he was convicted was a hideous one, the murder of a farmer. Why then all the fuss? One woman in Bristol wrote to ask me just that. "Since the man awaiting execution in Horfield Prison for his part in the brutal murder of an elderly man could hardly be described as a Christian, one wonders on what grounds you base your plea that he should not be prevented from celebrating the birth of Christ by being hanged in the week prior to Christmas." Others were more violent. A school-girl who stayed throughout the night vigil described how people had come up and shouted at her. One man said: "You're a load of ruffians. You're just as bad as the man going on the scaffold tomorrow."

This letter and these incidents help enormously to clarify the real issue. One of the strongest arguments against hanging is because of what it does to us. The ritual revenge we take on murderers is a lightning conductor for our own hates, a balm to ease our own guilt, and a pleasing stimulant for our own morbidity.

We reveal our advanced sensibilities by doing the killing in

secret, off-loading our own responsibility for it on to a hangman and a few warders whose mouths are sealed afterwards by the Official Secrets Act. Thus we are spared the painful details. We shall never know whether he fought or kicked or screamed or fainted away at the critical moment.

In the execution shed of one American prison which I visited 16 years ago they were proud of a little device they had invented for spreading the responsibility still further. When the murderer was standing hooded and roped on the trap-door a signal was given to eight warders locked alone in another room. Each then pressed a different button while a spinning roulette wheel outside made its random electric contact with one of the buttons and released the catch that dropped the convict to his fate. ERNIE, the Premium Bond machine, couldn't have done it better.

How soon before the gallows are banished to join the axe, the thumbscrew and the rack, in the museum of past horrors perpetrated by man on man? Not long now. The sense of revulsion grows with every execution that takes place. The anomalies of the Homicide Act are becoming increasingly manifest. The House of Commons, in free votes, has for a long time favoured abolition. After the next election the new young MPs who will come in, from all parties, will swell that majority for reform still further. The year 1964 will almost certainly see the final end of capital punishment in Britain. This week's hanging in Bristol will probably be the last that ever takes place there.

Meanwhile the public has had its pound of flesh and we can sing our carols and eat our plum pudding free from any slight embarrassment there might have been if the execution had been fixed, for example, on Christmas Day itself. That would have been most inconsiderate.

THE CIA CONSPIRACY

[A cautionary tale]

December 27, 1963

A REPORT ON CIA activities in Britain which has fallen into the hands of the Conservative Central Office reveals so grave a threat to the survival of the Government that the Cabinet is expected to meet in almost continuous session this weekend to consider what action should be taken. What is the CIA? What are its objectives and how does it work? Who is behind it and what has it achieved so far? An informant of unimpeachable integrity has told me the whole story.

CIA (the Committee for Indirect Action) was founded some years ago by a group of Top Establishment figures including senior civil servants who regularly lunched together and whose varied experience in Whitehall over the last 12 years had convinced them of the utter futility of parliamentary democracy. On that they were unanimous. But what was the alternative? Direct action demonstrations and sitdowns were altogether too uncomfortable for men of their age. A military coup was out of the question as the armed forces were now almost certainly too weak. Why not seize power by a discreet manipulation of official statistics? Alter the facts on which ministerial decisions were made and you would effect a painless *coup d'état* without shedding a drop of blood or reshuffling a single Minister.

For its first experiment the CIA decided to tackle the road programme. One member lived in Surbiton and years of campaigning had entirely failed to solve the mounting problem of traffic congestion there. Noticing a traffic counter outside his house, he carefully parked his car plumb on the thin black

cable which stretched across the road, leaving it there for three months. The result astonished and delighted them all. A few weeks later Mr Marples announced in the House of Commons, amid loud Government cheers, that work would begin at once on a new motorway to cope with the vast increase of traffic entering London from the South "as part of our plans for modernising Britain's roads". Indirect Action had scored its first success.

The next project the CIA undertook was a little more ambitious. As opera-lovers the committee deeply resented the failure of the BBC to provide enough of it on TV. They decided to change all that. With the help of a member of CIA who was in charge of BBC audience research, a startling rise in the viewing figures was engineered whenever an opera was televised. The BBC published these figures triumphantly and the number of operas televised first doubled and then actually trebled to meet this irresistible wave of "appreciation for the better things of life", as the Director of TV described it at a special press conference called to announce the programme changes. At first ITA figures did not correspond with those put out by the BBC until other CIA members (from the Central Electricity Generating Board) hit upon the idea of reducing the voltage on the national electricity grid whenever the BBC was broadcasting operas, thus slowing down the little electrical recording machines on which the TAM ratings are based, which then showed a disastrous falling-off of audiences for all programmes except operas. CIA held a celebration dinner the night that "Don Giovanni" was broadcast by the BBC simultaneously with the "Barber of Seville" on ITV.

The problem of raising money to finance CIA activities also proved surprisingly easy. The people from the Treasury who had invented Premium Bonds recruited the help of a maintenance engineer whose job it is to service Ernie. As a result of some minor adjustments, each member of the committee was able to count on regular prizes. From then on it was plain

sailing. The shutdown of many branch lines under the Beeching Plan was averted by the purchase of thousands of railway tickets at stations due for closure. Thus Premium Bond winnings, wisely used, began to wipe out the railway deficit.

CIA also claims the credit for the abolition of National Service. A senior civil servant in the Ministry of Defence who was in charge of trooping operations simply adjusted the figures very slightly to show a steady build-up of the number of men who appeared to be in transit at any one time between garrisons scattered in the most distant outposts of the Empire. These figures could never exactly be challenged and the men involved, amounting to 10 battalions, were added to Britain's strategic reserve. Indeed the Minister was able to report in the next White Paper on Defence that the British Army was "more mobile than at any time since 1945" and in these circumstances National Service was no longer necessary.

Up to this point CIA had steered clear of politics altogether, believing that it was able to operate with equal effectiveness whoever was in power. It had, however, reckoned without Sir Alec Douglas-Home. Since he took over CIA has run into an unexpected difficulty. It is gradually becoming clear that ministerial decisions—as, for example, the decision to go ahead with the TRS-2—now bear no relation whatsoever to the facts. Even wildly exaggerated statistics—like those in the Buchanan Report—which have been carefully fabricated to produce new policies have been completely ignored. CIA has been forced to recognise that even its most imaginative statisticians are no match against a really determined amateur.

It is for this reason alone that CIA has decided that "Home must go". The task is being tackled in a characteristically businesslike fashion. For over two years the committee has had men working inside all the major public opinion poll organisations—and one psephologist at Nuffield College to interpret their findings—in case they were wanted for this purpose. The

Liberal revival was engineered as a dummy run and was so successful that not only was Jo Grimond taken in by it but so were thousands of electors in Orpington who then voted Liberal in order to be "with it". Now the technique is to be used in earnest. Within a few weeks a tremendous Tory revival is to be created, reaching its climax when the real figures show the Government to be at its very weakest. They are confident that the PM will fall for it, stage a snap election and be massacred on polling day. It is this information that has now leaked to Conservative Central Office and has caused such a panic there.

What will a Labour Government do about CIA when it comes to power? Transport House has already scheduled it as a proscribed organisation and has sent a full list of its members to Harold Wilson, who has evolved a brilliant plan that will completely eliminate CIA members as a serious political force. They are all to be made peers.

PART V

PRACTICAL SOCIALISM

FORD VERSUS MARX

November 29, 1963

THE IDEOLOGICAL STRUGGLE between capitalism and communism, which has dominated world politics since 1917, has often been represented as a straight fight between Henry Ford and Karl Marx.

The ugliness and the contradictions of the first industrial revolution on which Marx built his philosophy of the class struggle and the collectivist state were directly challenged by Ford. His mass-produced motor-cars became the symbol of advancing affluence in capitalist societies wooing the workers from their class loyalties and destroying socialism for all time.

Today, in the West, car production figures have become the prime index for measuring economic growth and the annual motor shows have developed into modern harvest festivals, where huge congregations gather to give thanks for power-steering and tubeless tyres and to bow down before bigger tail-fins and automatic transmission. Ford, it is widely believed, has conquered Marx, banished planning and public ownership for ever, and made the world safe for a car-owning democracy and free enterprise.

Those who dream this comfortable dream should read the Buchanan Report on urban traffic and think long and hard about its implications. For its real importance far transcends the detailed proposals it makes for dealing with the short-term problems of congestion and is much more than a plea for a massive expansion of our present roadbuilding programme.

Professor Buchanan and his colleagues have undertaken a

penetrating study into urban life in the motor age and have revealed many fundamental problems that cannot be resolved within the framework of current policy, institutions or even philosophy. The traffic crisis, when analysed in depth, forces us to think about a host of other issues and compels us to revise our accepted ideas about how they can all be tackled.

We must, for example, now rethink the proper balance of expenditure between private cars and road construction. From 1952 to 1959 the Tories built six inches of new road for every new vehicle that came off the production line. With vehicle production now rising at an accelerating rate, even the expanded road programme is still totally inadequate.

Transport investment, like all public investment, has been grossly neglected in the last 12 years. The private car can kill our cities in any of three ways; by congesting them, by eating them up with concrete flyovers and motorways, or by encouraging everyone to leave them as dead deserted parking lots where no one wants to live or work. If we are to solve this problem we must face the fact that private profiteering and speculation in city land make urban renewal and redevelopment impossibly expensive. Without public ownership there can be no planning and no reconstruction.

The report also helps us to see that public transport is the only long-term answer to the problem of movement within cities. Buchanan has made a nonsense of Beeching, who is now engaged in cutting back even on some suburban rail lines and decanting more and more people on to the roads. The public transport which we must have to meet the more sophisticated needs of the urban traveller will involve extensive investment in trains and buses, express buses, car hire and taxi services, which will give us convenience without congestion.

Finally, it is clear that we must create entirely new agencies for city planning in place of the plethora of departments, committees and officials who now muddle on in isolation from each other—for ever treating symptoms and never the disease. The

Ministry of Transport, which should exercise this responsibility, has failed to do so.

The Buchanan Report will provoke acute controversy for years ahead and only good can come from it so long as we do not allow the arguments to divide us as motorists versus pedestrians or shopkeepers versus commuters. We are all people and the quality of our life depends on creating cities that will meet our all-round needs as fully as possible.

At Scarborough Harold Wilson told the Labour conference that science and technology would outdate our present methods of production and make existing skills obsolete. This new report proves it most dramatically. The motor-car has made more than our cities obsolete: it has outdated our institutions and much of the philosophy of *laissez-faire* as well.

It is therefore almost certain that the ugliness and the contradictions introduced into our society by the unplanned development of private motor traffic will lead to a demand for far more real planning and public ownership than ever emerged as the result of nineteenth-century capitalism. The historians may accord an honoured place to Henry Ford because he proved that Karl Marx had a point.

A NEW LOOK AT PUBLIC TRANSPORT

January 10, 1964

THE CONTINUING LONDON bus crisis will have served one very useful purpose if it forces us to think a bit harder about the rôle of public transport in our cities. For, however many urban motorways and two-tier roads and off-street car parks are built in the future, there is not the faintest possibility that our transport needs can be met by trying to reshape our towns so that everyone can move about in private cars. There just isn't room.

This is a proposition that requires little formal proof. The evidence is all around us every day as we watch the long rush-hour jams that throttle our streets and enmesh within them weary bus passengers and irritated motorists alike. What is the answer?

The one virtually invariable factor is the simple one of space —the square footage that we have in our cities. How can we make that space serve us best? How many passenger miles of travel can we squeeze out of it each day? The efficiency of different types of vehicle can actually be measured by calculating how many passenger miles of travel they provide in relation to the square footage of urban road space that they occupy. If you apply this statistical test you will discover that a bus is about 500 times as efficient as a private car and taxis are nearly as efficient as buses.

Since urban land values—which includes the value of roads—are so astronomically high, you might expect the economics of city travel to reflect, however roughly, the relative efficiency of these different types of vehicle. But they don't. The car owner pays more than the bus passenger, but the difference is

only a fraction of the real difference in social cost between the two types of travel.

The second factor that must be considered is the economic one, as it applies to individuals. Those who desert buses for their private cars are deliberately opting for a more expensive form of travel because the extra personal convenience is, for them, worth the price. Bus companies only provide a basic service and public transport has nothing to offer to the passenger who is looking for something better.

We shall only make sense of urban travel when we begin relating these two factors one to another—the efficiency of the public service vehicle from the point of view of the community, and the desire of a growing number of people for quick convenient comfortable transport to meet their varied needs. Once you start trying to do this then you are bound to think afresh about public transport services. A completely new system has got to be evolved that is far more flexible than the one that now exists.

Some of it should be cheaper and simpler than the present buses. Those unhappy men and women who stand for hours in the rain and cold of the winter waiting for buses to take them to the main line railway stations for their journeys home would gladly accept lower standards in return for greater speed. For them, single-decker trailer vehicles, even without seats, rather like the ones used at London Airport to take passengers to their planes, would meet their need for a quick feeder service. If they had huge doors for easy embarking and disembarking, these "mobile bus queues" would take half the agony out of the rush hours. They would charge a very small fixed fare.

Next would come your regular double-deck buses to meet the more normal needs of the travelling public with a varied fare structure according to distance. Above them again, in terms of fare costs, would come the single-decker express bus following fixed routes and only stopping when hailed or to set down a passenger on board. These would be much more com-

fortable, and quicker, and would have to have some accommodation for baggage.

Next, in terms of cost, would come the roving taxi. The present taxi services are hopelessly inadequate because the earnings for the company that owns them—and even more for the owner-driver—are so uncertain that they only keep afloat by a rigid restriction on their numbers. If taxis were run as part of the public transport system they could be run much more economically and deployed much more effectively to meet the varying needs of a city at different hours of the day and night.

Most expensive of all would be the radio taxi service that would virtually guarantee to provide transport in a matter of moments. You would be paying for this with higher fares but it would be worth doing because of the great convenience it would bring. A taxi of this class would be, effectively, a chauffeur-driven hired car meeting the special needs of a limited range of people.

If a city provided services of this kind by public transport the private car owner would find most of his needs met, and he would not be surprised to find that the cost to him of using his own car in the city would then be brought more closely into line with the real cost of his doing so. It is foolish to talk of banning the private motorist from our cities.

The right way to deal with it is to evolve a pricing system beginning with the very cheap standee bus and ending with the highly expensive private car. You pay your money and you take your choice. It is the only way to finance the necessary investment and decent wages and conditions for the staff involved.

A host of new technical possibilities are opening up to make possible the development of a really efficient modern public transport system designed to meet the more sophisticated needs of the present and the future. In the whole field of transport there is no more exciting prospect than this, and nothing that would do more to make cities tolerable for those of us who live and work in them.

THE MOTOR GOD

May 15, 1964

THIS WEEKEND, WHITSUNTIDE, is one of the most important religious festivals of our society. It is the spring festival of the Motor God. Over the last 70 years this cult has swept irresistibly across Britain. Ushered in with solemnity, each car preceded by a red flag, it soon burst through these legislative restrictions and still celebrates its victory with an annual procession of holy relics that roar and sputter from London to Brighton.

The Motor God is a household god, that has to be washed and polished and propitiated with accessories. Professors are asked to estimate the demands it will make upon our cities and towns, and a huge outcry goes up whenever its freedom of movement is in any way restricted. Britain went to war with Egypt, in 1956, and our soldiers are now fighting in the hot desert of Southern Arabia to safeguard the sacred spirit which the Motor God requires.

The Private Motor today means much more than transport. It is the individual's passport to freedom and power and personal status. The managing director's feelings about his Bentley and the Rocker's love for his bike are indistinguishable. When we talk about the scientific revolution at political meetings, the vision conjured up in the minds of most of those who come to listen is of a car, or a new car, or a faster car, of their very own.

But the Motor God does not serve us for nothing. He exacts a fearful tribute in return. Last year he took nearly 7,000

people's lives, gravely injured 90,000, and 250,000 less seriously. This week another road safety campaign called "Think Ahead" was launched with the usual homilies and prepackaged publicity. Of course we must hope it will succeed. But of course we know it won't succeed and when we hear it hasn't we shan't be surprised or really care. At least we shan't care enough to do what has to be done to make the roads safe. How many men and women and children who are now happily packing their picnic baskets and preparing for a holiday weekend will be dead or maimed before we all go back to work on Tuesday? Certainly hundreds. We know that. And we repress the secret hope that lies in all our hearts that it will be somebody else who will be involved and not us.

They sometimes say there are no great causes left. But here is a great cause waiting for its champions. Until enough people demand a change of policy the slaughter and the bereavement and the waste will go on. Any Minister of Transport who really decided to take road safety seriously would have to brace himself for the most bitter hostility from the unthinking worshippers of the Motor God. He would be attacked as being "anti-motorist" and for restricting personal freedom and for trying to legislate for a new morality. The pressure groups that surround the motor industry would lobby ferociously against him until even the Gallup Polls began to reflect the ambivalence of our society when forced to decide what price in personal inconvenience it is prepared to pay to save lives.

The key to a real policy for road safety lies in the acceptance of one single simple principle: that those who own vehicles and use our roads must expect the same sort of safety control that we take for granted when we are dealing with safety at sea, safety on the railways, or safety in the air. The implications of accepting that principle are very far-reaching indeed.

It would mean for example that no manufacturers would

be allowed to mass produce a car until the prototype had received a roadworthiness certificate. A Government design team would work on the model and insist that safety be built into the basic design, over-riding, where necessary, the demands of the salesmen for sharp tailfins or dangerous protrusions. It would also mean the most rigorous annual vehicle tests for all private and commercial vehicles, of whatever age, to guard against that maintenance neglect which is just as serious in a new car as in an old one.

Medical certificates of fitness would have to be produced before a driver's licence would be issued and all drivers would have a duty to report the onset of any specified disability which might make them a danger.

The Highway Code would have to be developed into safety regulations that would be binding upon all road-users, and the penalties for disregarding the regulations would have to be made more serious. Some motoring offences like drunken driving are criminal and should be treated as such. Other offences are less morally reprehensible. But in either case those who do not abide by the safety law should expect to forfeit the right to drive and for certain offences the withdrawal of the driving licence should be immediate and mandatory. For example, in Cincinnati recently it was laid down that all teenagers who violated the speed limit automatically lost their licences. And there certainly should be an upper speed limit on all roads including motorways.

New regulations are no good without enforcement and the ratio of police to motor vehicles is steadily falling. There is a very strong case for creating a national or local Road Police Service to take responsibility for traffic engineering and management, point duty and parking meters, highway patrols and the supervision of driving schools. Similarly, there is a powerful case for establishing traffic courts which could call on trained medical and engineering officers and concern themselves with

the prevention of accidents as well as with the enforcement of the law.

Could such a frontal attack on the Motor God succeed? I do not know. But it is certain that no society that allows the present pagan ritual of slaughter to go unchecked can really call itself civilised.

THE FUTURE OF THE POST OFFICE

June 19, 1964

THE HEAVY PALL of smoke that hangs above the present battle over nationalisation has, unfortunately, obscured some of the more interesting ideas that ought to be discussed. Of these the most important is the use of public enterprise, alone or in partnership, to develop science-based industries as key points of growth in the economy. The relevance of this proposal is obvious, both for strengthening existing industries—like computers and machine tools—and for opening up a real prospect of advanced industrial expansion in declining areas. If this really can be done it would bury the old sterile controversies about nationalisation once and for all. But where can we expect this breakthrough to come? The answer may surprise us all. For it could come first in a field that has for so long been in public ownership that we forget it is nationalised at all—the Post Office.

The GPO is a science-based industry but it has not yet utilised the full potentialities of the revolution in communications that has taken place. The most obvious example of this is in the carriage of mail. Hundreds of millions of postcards, letters, and packages are carried every year and there are enormous savings to be made if only the routine work can be further mechanised. There are immediate returns to be gained from the standardisation of sizes and even more from the full use of code numbers. Progress has been painfully slow and it is unlikely that exhortation alone will ever achieve results. The one sure way would be to lay down standard sizes and

then make an extra charge for those who will not use them.

There is also room for a new type of standard code telegram (like the war-time airgrams) which could be phoned through to the Post Office nearest the place where the telegram had to be delivered, cutting out much of the administrative work involved in the present telegraph service. We also need credit card facilities for all postal services. The present telephone credit card has now been in operation for some years, and there is no reason why a person possessing one should not be able to use it to purchase stamps or any other service the Post Office offers and be billed through his telephone account.

Another great area for development lies in the Post Office Savings Bank. GPO experience in this field goes back over many years and if the GIRO credit transfer system were introduced in this country it would enable the POSB to cater for the needs of millions of people who would like to have a bank account and whom the joint stock banks are themselves now trying to woo. Since the TUC first advocated it nearly 40 years ago, the Post Office has become the agent for cashing vouchers for millions of pensions and other benefits. If these could be paid directly into Post Office Savings Accounts the mechanical work would be immeasurably reduced. Recipients could then draw out the money as and when they needed it, and any money they left in their accounts would automatically become a part of our national savings.

Similarly the telephone service could be vastly improved. Quite apart from the much more rapid expansion of the service, the Post Office should be allowed to enter into the field of developing, manufacturing and renting the specialised telephone equipment now largely supplied by private manufacturers. This would bring economies in servicing and engineering staff and make the telephone service more profitable.

There is also much to be done in the development of telephone communications for new purposes.

If a telephone interpreter unit was established it could be of great value for British exporters. A small panel of first-class multi-lingual interpreters, capable of simultaneous translation, could then act as a channel through which business firms could telephone their customers in any part of the world and speak directly in their own language. Advertised abroad, it would also mean that a German or Italian firm could phone (through the interpreter) any British firm it wished. This might even be extended to help foreign tourists. If in every phone kiosk the tele-tourist number was displayed, a visitor to London could get information or phone friends without any language difficulties. It would be quite a good sales point for the British Holiday Board if they could advertise that "Every British telephone speaks your language".

Consideration should also be given to the provision of local telephone information services covering the whole range of national, municipal and voluntary services. If by dialling H-E-L-P from any phone box, a citizen could get through to an operator who could refer him to all the services that he might need, it would do something to break down the barrier between the people and their public servants. It might even be possible to develop a rota of volunteer "Welfare Samaritans" who were always available for advice and who would see to it that, where a case required the co-ordination of different services, they were all notified. If this could be coupled with the provision of cheaper, or even subsidised, shared telephone services for old people living alone it might help to conquer the ghastly loneliness that afflicts them.

There are many other ways, too, in which the Post Office could break new ground to serve the public. A closer integration of Post Office and Railways Parcels Services might bring great benefits. The installation of radio-telephones for business

men on crack inter-city trains would offer an attraction that motor travel could not rival. The provision of postal bus services in the countryside would be greatly appreciated, and could be introduced with only a marginal increase in the cost of running the present vans on their already scheduled service of mail delivery and collection.

Many of these ideas would require a great deal more study and more basic technical research. But one merit of them all is that they are self-financing. An imaginative Post Office development programme would make itself felt immediately on the general public, all of whom are regular users of its services. Long before other science-based industries could get under way, the Post Office could demonstrate how public enterprise can meet the community's growing and more sophisticated needs.

THE STRUGGLE FOR POWER

July 31, 1964

THE PROUDEST CLAIM made for parliamentary democracy, whose greatest living practitioner, Winston Churchill, retired this week, is that it gives to ordinary people an effective say over their own destiny. We are ceaselessly reminded of the centuries of struggle against kings and tyrants whose power was tamed and ultimately brought under control by the popularly elected representatives who sit in the House of Commons. From the model Parliament of 1295 to the Representation of the People Act in 1948 (which finally established the principle of one man, one woman, one vote) the story is told as if it were a steady progress towards perfection. Every MP who takes parties of visitors around the Palace of Westminster reminds them that the Commons control of Purse and Sword is its ultimate sanction against dictatorship. The Mother of Parliament rests peacefully on her laurels confident that the British people really do decide their own future and are masters of their fate.

But is it true today? The achievements of the past are undeniable. The victories won by generations of radical reformers deserve our gratitude. We are infinitely more fortunate in our system of government than most people. But that is not the point. The real question is how much power do we now have to shape our future? How effective are the safeguards for freedom and the opportunities for participation that now exist? And if they are not good enough how do we improve them? What are the battles this generation must fight and when do we begin to fight them?

The survival of this island and its inhabitants can no longer be secured by a British Parliament, armed with Erskine May, solemnly enacting the ritual control over Purse and Sword. It depends in the first instance, on whether the advocates of co-existence and co-operation in East and West (Khrushchev and Johnson) can hold their own against the advocates of Cold War and nuclear diplomacy (Mao and Goldwater). In the long run it will be decided by whether we can convert the embryonic world parliament founded at San Francisco 19 years ago into a body as effective as the Westminster prototype.

At home, the freedom of the individual depends on developing a whole host of new techniques for keeping man's ascendancy over the vast new power groups that technology has spawned. This problem is sometimes oversimplified into a struggle between the citizen and the state. That can be a part of it, but it is only a part. The assaults on privacy and encroachments on liberty in a modern society are by no means the prerogative of civil servants or ministers. We are bombarded by advertisers, pursued by salesmen, interrogated by market research workers, rated for credit-worthiness, employed by huge organisations, studied, indexed and labelled. We are continually influenced by a host of special interests armed with scientific techniques of persuasion who need us for their own purposes.

In addition we are fast losing the battle to understand our environment. The greater man's power over nature, the more complex the business of decision-making becomes and the more remote from, and unintelligible to, the ordinary person. The explosion of knowledge is at once our greatest blessing and our greatest problem. It enriches us materially and simultaneously alienates us the more effectively from the processes of full understanding and informed judgment. For anyone who tries, however conscientiously, to keep abreast of events

and scientific discoveries, it is a perpetual panting race to climb up a fast-moving escalator going down.

These are some of the new factors that inhibit the sense of belonging which should characterise a self-governing community. But there are also other factors inherited from the past. Our institutions and our class structure have been built up by accretion over the centuries like so many stalagmites in some dripping cave. This rigid social structure is our greatest national handicap. People, ideas, organisations and the boundaries between the professions, are frozen almost solid in a period when flexibility, experimentation, innovation and individual enterprise are most urgently needed.

If we are to liberate ourselves from the rigidity of the past and try to assert human authority over the new technical Frankensteins of the present, we shall find ourselves embarking upon a far-reaching programme of reform that could be, for us, as important as the Chartist demands were for our great-grandfathers. It must certainly include a vast expansion of public education to extend to as many people as possible an opportunity to understand the world in which we live. It will obviously involve making a far more intelligent use of the means of mass communication, both for teaching and for encouraging political feedback. It will necessitate a much closer integration between all types of specialisation and between creative research and practical politics. It will mean revamping old institutions and creating entirely new ones to replace everything from the limping diplomacy of nation-states down to the decaying impotence of local government. And it will certainly require a firm attack upon entrenched privilege which constrains man's innate capacity to develop to the full. To carry this through we must create an entirely new mood of confidence and optimism among those who are so frightened by the formidable nature of the obstacles ahead of them that they have relapsed into cynicism and apathy.

The 1964 election is quite as much about these things as it

is about the important details of domestic and foreign policy; and I suspect that more people realise this than would ever emerge from the findings of the pollsters as they pore over the psephological entrails of the tribe. These are the things I believe in and these are what I shall be campaigning about when the battle begins in earnest.

